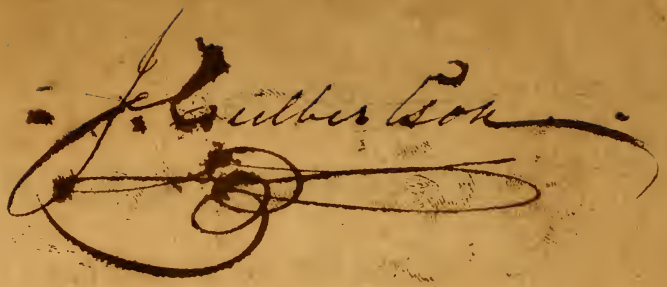

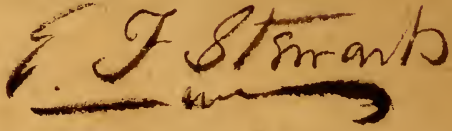

Joseph Culbertson

THE

MOURNER COMFORTED.

A SELECTION OF EXTRACTS,

CONSOLATORY

ON THE DEATH OF FRIENDS.

FROM THE

WRITINGS OF THE MOST EMINENT DIVINES AND OTHERS.

INCLUDING

DR. JOHNSON'S CELEBRATED SERMON ON THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE.

TOGETHER WITH

PRAYERS SUITED TO THE VARIOUS INSTANCES OF MORTALITY.

BY JAMES ABERCROMBIE, D. D.

SENIOR ASSISTANT MINISTER OF CHRIST CHURCH, ST. PETER'S, AND ST. JAMES'S.

Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted. Matt. v. 5.

PUBLISHED BY BRADFORD AND INSKEEP, PHILADELPHIA;

AND INSKEEP AND BRADFORD, NEWYORK.

J. Maxwell, Printer.

1812.

District of Pennsylvania, to wit:

SEAL.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the twenty first day of March, in the thirty-sixth year of the independence of the United States of America, A D. 1812, Bradford and Inskeep, of the said district, have deposited in this office the title of a book the right whereof they claim as proprietors in the words following, to wit:

"The Mourner Comforted. A selection of extracts, consolatory on the death "of friends. From the writings of the most eminent divines and others. In- "cluding Dr. Johnsons's celebrated sermon on the death of his wife. Together "with prayers suited to the various instances of mortality. By James Abercrom- "bie, D. D. Senior assistant Minister of Christ Church, St. Peters's, and St. "James's. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted. Mat v. 5."

In conformity to the act of the congress of the United States, intituled "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned." And also to the act, entitled "An act supplementary to an act entitled 'An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned,' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints."

D. CALDWELL,
Clerk of the District of Pennsylvania.

DEDICATION.

TO THE

MEMBERS OF THE EPISCOPAL CONGREGATIONS

OF

CHRIST-CHURCH, ST. PETER'S, AND ST. JAMES'S.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

WITH the most affectionate regard for your temporal, and anxious solicitude for your eternal interests, I dedicate this volume to YOU: because it contains such consolatory and salutary sentiments, as both duty and inclination would impel me, as one of your spiritual guides, to suggest to you, in many of those severely trying exigencies of humanity, when the soothing remonstrances and advice of a spiritual pastor are acceptable and useful.

From my unavoidable confinement in the Literary Institution over which I preside, you must be sensible, that it is not always in my power *then* to visit you as frequently as either you might wish, or my own sympathy would prompt. Under this painful restriction, I present to you, as a substitute for my personal attendance, when not able to give it, this Collection of Extracts, from the writings of some of the most eminent divines, and other wise and good men; exhibiting the authority derived from the Holy Scriptures in favour of the Immortality of the Soul, and the belief that, in a fu-

ture state of existence we shall recognize each other. To these I have added Prayers suited to the various instances of mortality which may occur: and I earnestly implore the Divine Blessing upon this humble endeavour to mitigate the anguish of a wounded spirit, and to direct the afflicted mind to those copious sources of consolation which Christianity offers to those who mourn.

I remain, brethren,

With unfeigned respect, gratitude, and affection,

Your Friend and Pastor,

JAMES ABERCROMBIE.

Philadelphia, March 20, 1812.

PREFACE.

To sooth the anguish of a bleeding heart—to suppress the sigh of sorrow—and mitigate the pangs of a wounded spirit—or rather, to cheer the disconsolate and dejected Mourner, and direct his views to the only solid and certain source of comfort and of confidence, is an undertaking, equally congenial with the spirit of Christianity, and the dictates of a humane and benevolent mind. For, of "the various ills that flesh is heir to," surely none is capable of exciting such bitter agony, of so deeply lacerating the most refined and delicate sensibilities of our nature, and of extinguishing even the desire of existence, as the death of a beloved relative or friend —a parent, a child, or companion—who was dear to us as our own souls—whose presence exhilerated us, whose converse delighted us, whose endearing qualities awakened into action every virtuous affection, and who was bound to us by every tie of social intercourse;—every fibre of the human heart.

To produce this consolatory, this desirable effect, the wise, the pious, the humane, have, in various forms,

exerted the powers of Genius, displayed the energies of Reason, and enforced the precepts, the promises of Christianity. The fascinating charms of Poetry, the persuasive deductions of Philosophy, and the soothing accents of "pure and undefiled Religion," have been occasionly offered for the relief of the afflicted. A Tillotson, a Blair, a Doddridge, a Young, a Milton, a Gray, and a Johnson, with many others of equal celebrity, have exerted their best abilities, the noblest powers of human intellect, in endeavouring to assuage the bitterness of grief, to elicit from the infliction its *proper* effect, and thereby to render it a blessing in disguise.

A selection of the most interesting passages from the writings of such wise and good men, will, it is presumed, be peculiarly acceptable and useful to those who may be called upon to suffer the loss of relatives or friends, and who then stand most in need of spiritual consolation and advice. This conviction has operated, as the principal inducement with the editor, to make the compilation; and that more especially for the use of the three large congregations to which he has the privilege of administering.

A considerable part of the compilation is taken from a collection of "Sermons and Extracts" on this particular subject, lately published in England; to the most eloquent and impressive of which a copious addition is now made, partly from the writings of American

divines. The prayers, and the sermon by Dr. Samuel Johnson are also added.

" Our dying friends come o'er us like a cloud
To damp our brainless ardors; and abate
That glare of life, which often blinds the wise.
Our dying friends are pioneers, to smooth
Our rugged path to death, to break those bars
Of terror and abhorrence, Nature throws
Cross our obstructed way; and thus, to make
Welcome as safe, our port from every storm.
Smitten friends
Are angels sent on errands full of love;
For us they languish, and for us they die.
And shall they languish, shall they die in vain?
Ungrateful shall we grieve their hov'ring shades,
Which wait the revolution in our hearts?
Shall we disdain their silent soft address;
Their posthumous advice, and pious prayer;
Senseless as herds which graze their hallowed graves,
Tread under foot their agonies and groans,
Frustrate their anguish, and destroy their deaths"?

Young's Night Thoughts, 3d B.

CONTENTS.

Dedication - - - - - - - - - iii
Preface. - - - - - - - - - - v
A friendly visit to the house of mourning. - - - 3
Extract from a discourse by the Rev. Dr. Harwood on a future state. - - - - - - - - 47
Sermon by bishop Bull on a middle state. - - - 57
Rachel comforted.—Extract from a discourse by bishop Horne. - - - - - - - - - 75
Extract from a sermon by Dr. Geo. Hill on a future state. 83
Extract from a sermon by Dr. Blair, on the happiness of a future state. - - - - - - - - 89
Extract from a sermon by archdeacon Shepherd, on a future state. - - - - - - - - 93
The meditations of a recluse, by J. Brewster - - 107
Extract from Theologia Reformata by Dr. Edwards. - 113
Sermon by Archdeacon Paley, on our knowledge of one another in a future state - - - - - 121
Sermon by Thomas Gisborne on the lesson in the burial service. - - - - - - - - - 129
Extract from a sermon by W. Jones, on the resurrection. 145
Sermon by the Rev. J. Drysdale, on the hope of Heaven. 155
Funeral Oration by Dr. P. Doddridge against the fears of death 173
The Christian's defence by C. Drelincourt. - - 181
Dissertation by R. Price D. D. On our knowledge of each other after death. - - - - - - 189
Sermon by T. Gisborne, on the happiness of religious knowledge. - - - - - - - 211
Sermon by Dr. Doddridge on the death of Children. - 227
Extract from a Sermon by Dr. A. Maclaine, on Religious Principles. - - - - - - - - 265
Sermon by Archbishop Tillotson, on the Happiness of a Heavenly Conversation. - - - - - 271
The Christian's Consolation in Domestic Distress. - 289
Consolations for the afflicted, by Dr. Dodd. - - - 313
Sir William Temple's Letter to Lady Essex, on the death of her only daughter. - - - - - - 334

Sermon on Death by Dr. H. Blair. - - - - - 350
Sermon by Dr. S. Johnson, on the Death of his Wife - 363
Sermon on Religious Consolation, by R. Morehead. - 375
Extract from *The Mourner*, by Dr Grosvenor. - - 383
Sermon on the death of a beloved Pupil, by Dr. W. Smith. 403
Sermon by the Rev. Jacob Duche, A. M. on Hope in God. 419
Extract from a Sermon, on the Christian's Victory over death, by the Rev J. S. J. Gardiner. - - - - - 431
Extract from a Sermon on the death of Dr. Sproat, by Ashbel Green, D. D. - - - - - - - - - 437
Extract from a discourse on the happiness of good men in a future state by Samuel Stanhope Smith. D. D. - 442
Consolatory Reflections on Death, by Charles H. Wharton, D. D. in a letter to a friend. - - - - - - 455
Letter from Dr. I. Langhorne to a Lady on the death of her daughter. - - - - - - - - 463
Letter from the Rev. Job Orton to Dr. Stonehouse on the death of his daughter - - - - - - - 471
Letter from Dugal Buchannan to a friend on the death of a favourite daughter. - - - - - - - 477
A Pathetic Letter by T. I. on the death of a child. - 483
Monody to the memory of an only Daughter, by her father. - - - - - - - - - - 487
Lines on the death of a child at daybreak, by the Rev. R. Cecil. - - - - - - - - - -
Poetical inscription on the Tomb stone of an Infant. - 495
Lines selected from Dr. Youngs, Night Thoughts. - 498

PRAYERS,

Accommodated to the various instaces of morality. - 499
Introductory Prayer. - - - - - - - *ib.*
Prayer for a parent on the death of a child. - - *ib.*
Prayer for a child on the death of a parent. - - 500
Prayer for a husband on the death of his wife. - 501
Prayer for a wife on the death of her husband - - 503
Prayer on the death of a friend. - - - - 504
Prayer to be used in a family on the death of any of its members. - - - - - - - - - - 505

A FRIENDLY VISIT, *&c.*

YOUR present affliction, my dear friend, demands something more than the usual forms of condolence. Sorrow, which like yours, cannot be prevented, may yet be *alleviated* and *improved.* This is my design in addressing you, and if I seem to intrude upon your retirement, let my motive be my apology. Having felt how much *better it is to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting;** having received my best *lessons*, *companions*, and even *comforts* in it; I would administer from my little stock of experience: and while I thus endeavour to assist your meditations, shall rejoice if I may contribute, though but a mite, to your comfort.

Were I, indeed, acquainted with the peculiar circumstances of your loss, I should employ particular considerations: but my present address can have only a *general* aim; which is to acquaint the heart, at a favourable moment, with its grand concerns; to give it a serious impression when *softened;* and an heavenly direction when *moved.* Let us, therefore, sit down humbly together in this house of mourning: If *the heart of the wise be found*† here, your experience, I hope, will prove that here also it is *formed:* and let us calmly con-

* Eccl. vii. 2. † Eccl. vii. 4.

template some momentous objects intimately connected with it, and viewed with peculiar advantage from it.

Our GOD is the first of these objects: with him we seldom form any close acquaintance till we meet him in trouble. He commands silence now, that He may be heard; and removes intervening objects, that He may be seen. A Sovereign Disposer appears, who, as *Lord of all*, hath only resumed what he lent; whose will is the law of his creatures; and who expressly declares his will in the present affliction. We should seriously consider, that all allowed repugnance to the determinations of his government, (however made known to us) is *sin;* and that every wish to alter the appointments of his wisdom is *folly: we know not what we ask.*—When God discovers himself in any matter, those who know him, *will keep silence before him.** *Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him?* How just was the reply; "*Behold I am vile! what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth.*"†

This silent submission under trying dispensations, is variously exemplified as well as inculcated in the Scriptures. An awful instance of sin and sorrow occurs in the family of Aaron; his sons disregarded a divine appointment, and *there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them; but* Aaron *held his peace.*‡ Eli, in similar circumstances, silenced his heart with this single but sufficient consideration, "*It is the Lord.*"§—David, under a stroke which he declares consumed him, observes, "*I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because THOU didst it.*"‖ And Job, when stript of every com-

* Hab. ii. 20. ‡ Lev. x. 2, 3. ‖ Psa. xxxix. 9.
† Job xl. 2, 4. § 1 Sam. iii. 18.

fort, blessed the name of Him who *took away*, as well as *gave*.* Whatever be the nature of your calamity, may it be attended with such an humble and child-like spirit as these possessed!

But the Sovereign Disposer is also the COMPASSIONATE FATHER. Among other instances of his tenderness, you may have observed the peculiar supports he affords under peculiar trials. Let us mark, and acknowledge, the hand which mingles mercy with judgment, and alleviation with distress. The parents I have just mentioned lost their children under circumstances far more distressing than yours:—The desire of your eyes (if not the idol of your heart) was, perhaps, almost a stranger: you strove hard to detain it, but He, who took the young children into his arms and blessed them, took yours; and taking it, seemed to say, *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter;*† —patiently *suffer this little one to come unto me, for of such is my kingdom*‡ composed:—*Verily I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father.*§ "If I take away your child, I take it to myself—Is not this infinitely beyond any thing you could do for it? Could you say to it, if it had lived, 'Thou shalt *weep no more, the days of thy mourning are ended?*'‖ Could you shew it any thing in this world like *the glory of God, and of the Lamb?*¶ Could you raise it to any honour here like *receiving a crown of life?*"** The voice of a *Father of mercies and a God of all comfort*,†† speaks as distinctly in the death as in the

* Job i. 21.
† John xiii. 7.
‡ Matt. x. 14.
§ Matt. xviii. 10.
‖ Isa. xxx. 19.
¶ Rev. xxii. 20.
** James i. 12.
†† 2 Cor. i. 3.

birth of an infant. *A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel, weeping for her children, refused to be comforted, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord, "refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, for there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border.* It is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones should perish."*†

It is a pious friend that has just yielded up his breath? The same voice seems to say, "Turn from him, or rather turn from his *clay*—his faded *garment.—He* himself *is taken from the evil to come;—he is entered into peace.*"‡

When the able minister, the exemplary parent, or the faithful partner depart, a consternation often seizes the circles which they blessed. We are so stunned by the sudden blow, or occupied with the distressing circumstances, that we scarcely can hear God saying, "*Fear not, I, even I, am he that comforteth you:*§ I, your Father, am yet alive; I gave you your departed friend; I sent every benefit which was conveyed through him; trust me for blessings yet in store; trust me with him, and with yourselves."

Whatever notions one who lives *without God in the world* may form of dying, *we* should learn from his word to regard it merely as a *translation*,—a change in which nothing is lost which is really valuable. As surely as we *believe that Jesus died and rose again*, so surely do we believe that *them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.*‖—Taught of God, we should

* Jer. xv. 17.
† Matt. xviii. 14.
‡ Isa. lvii. 1, 2.
§ Isa. li. 12.
‖ 1 Thess. iv. 14.

view losses, sickness, pain, and death, but as the several trying stages by which a good man, like Joseph, is conducted from a *tent* to a *court*. *Sin* his disorder; *Christ* his physician; *pain* his medicine; the *bible* his support; the *grave* his bed; and *death* itself an angel, expressly sent to release the worn-out labourer, or crown the faithful soldier. *I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, write, blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works follow them.**

But admitting the state of your departed friend to be doubtful, yet in all cases that are really so, let us cultivate honourable thoughts of GOD; let us remember the FAITHFUL CREATOR. Righteousness is his throne, though clouds surround it. Whatever he has left *obscure* we may safely leave him to explain. Let us recollect that, amidst innumerable obscurities, he hath made things *clear* in proportion as they are *important;* and therefore repeatedly urges it upon our conscience, that the door is still open to *us;*—that it is awful to stand before it *unresolved;*—that we must trust him to-day;—and that to-morrow he will equally remove our conjectures and our complaints.

Perhaps you are ready to reply, "*I have heard many such things;* and *I also could speak as you do, if your soul were in my soul's stead:*† but my heart, and my expectations are so crushed by this blow, that I can hear nothing but "*thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound grievous;—thou hast no healing medicines.*"‡

* Rev. xiv. 13. † Job xvi. 2, 4. ‡ Jer. xxx. 12, 13.

Beware, however, of falling into their sin who *limited the Holy One of Israel.** There is a charge continually brought against man, that in his troubles, the source and the resource are equally forgotten. *Though affliction cometh not forth of the dust*,†—yet *none saith, where is* GOD, *my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?*‡ Endeavour then, in extremities, to recollect an ALL-SUFFICIENT FRIEND—a very present HELP in trouble. He at least may add (as he does in the passage just alluded to) "*I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord.*" Cannot the voice which rebuked a tempestuous sea, calm our troubled spirits? Is his hand shortened at all, that he cannot *bless our latter end*, like Job's, *more than the beginning?*§ Is it not the Lord *that maketh poor, and maketh rich; that bringeth low and lifteth up?*‖ Many, whose hearts have been desolate like yours, while they have looked *around*, have at length *looked* UPWARD *unto Him, and been lightened?*¶ A single promise has afforded them not only relief, but strong consolation.

Let us, therefore, my dear friend, *turn again to this strong hold as prisoners of hope: even to-day can he render double unto us.*** Let us look to *Abraham's* GOD, and his encouragement is ours; "*Fear not,—I am* GOD ALMIGHTY††—*q. d.* I am all-sufficient in all cases: I am enough; *and able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think.*‡‡ I have taken away thy *gourd*, but dost thou well to be angry?—Have I left nothing for thankfulness?—This world; however,

* Psalm lxxviii. 41.
† Job v. 6.
‡ Job xxxv. 10.
§ Job xlii. 12.
‖ 1 Sam. ii. 7.
¶ Psalm xxxiv. 5.
** Zech. ix. 12.
†† Gen. xvii. 1.
‡‡ Eph. iii. 20.

cannot be your *home*, nor its objects your *consolation:* they are all too poor for the soul of man. *Look unto me and be saved:**—*Acquaint thyself with me, and be at peace:*†—*Follow me, and you shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.*‡ However dark and distressing the present state of things may appear, *commit thy fatherless children to my care, I will preserve them alive; and let the widows trust in me.*"§

Still the beloved object is gone, and your heart follows it. You can scarcely receive counsel from infinite wisdom, or comfort from Omnipotence. To every fresh encouragement you are ready to reply, "*Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead?—Shall the dead arise and praise thee?—Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction?*"‖ His word repeatedly assures you they shall; and that *all that are in the graves shall hear his voice:*¶ but it informs you also, that he can do abundantly more for the living than merely restore their dead friends, or revive their fainting spirits;—it teaches you that he can sanctify the separation,—that he can give a divine life to the survivor, *though dead in trespasses and sins,*** and inseparably unite both in his kingdom. If the Comforter could make up for the loss of *Christ's* bodily presence; yea, make it even *expedient* that HE *should go away;*†† how much more can he supply the place of every creature!

May this COMFORTER, writing his word in your mind, help you to say with a confidence highly ho-

* Isa. xlv. 22.
† Job xxii. 21.
‡ John viii. 12.
§ Jer. xlix. 11.
‖ Psalm lxxxviii. 10, 11.
¶ John v. 28.
** Eph. ii. 1.
†† John xvi. 7.

nourable to himself and his gospel, "My poor perishing gourd is, indeed, withered a day before I expected it;—my broken reed is gone;—but God is left,—*a father to the fatherless,—an husband to the widow,**—*and now, Lord, what wait I for? truly my hope is in thee.*† Thou canst give me, *in thine house, a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters*, even, *an everlasting name which shall not be cut off;*‡ and therefore, *though the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine, yet I will rejoice in the* LORD, *I will joy in the* GOD OF MY SALVATION."§

Once more; let us endeavour, at such seasons as these, to recognize a GRACIOUS MONITOR. Whenever the Lord *strikes*, he *speaks*. Let us listen at such a time as this with humble attention, yet with holy confidence, for it is the voice of a *friend*,—a wonderful *counsellor*. Let us with the prophet resolve to ascend the tower of observation, and observe *what he will say unto us, and what we shall answer when we are reproved.* If with him we thus watch our dispensation, *at the end*, like his, *it shall speak.*‖

God is continually raising up witnesses, and sending them in his name to *sound the alarm in Zion.*¶ He charges them to admonish the wise, as well as the foolish virgins, to beware of slumbering, since the bridegroom is at hand: and when one is called away, to cry to those that remain, "*Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.*** Some indeed, like the sons of Lot, desperately scorn the ad-

* Psalm lxviii. 5.
† Psalm xxxix. 7.
‡ Isa. lvi. 5.
§ Hab. iii. 17, 18.
‖ Hab. ii. 1—3.
¶ Joel ii. 1.
** Matt. xxiv. 44.

monition, and treat it as the fear of dotage.* Some, like those in the Acts, *are in doubt, saying one to another, "What meaneth this?"—and others mocking reply, "These men are full of new wine."*† But TRUTH, like a rock furiously assaulted, but unshaken, remains to scorn its scorners: and, while the witnesses continue to bear a faithful and consistent testimony, God, sooner or later, appears in vindication of their integrity and his own word. Entering a careless family, he smites the first-born; and, as one that *will* be heard, calls aloud, "*Awake, thou that sleepest; arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*"‡

And is it not, my afflicted friend, an infinite mercy, if, by *any* means, God will enter with such a *light*—that he will rouse such a *sleeper?*—that, by his minister *Death*, he will arrest the attention of him who has slighted every other minister?—What patience! what long-suffering! to take such an one apart; bring him from noise and occupation into the secret and silent chamber; speak to his heart; and seal the most important truths on it, by the most affecting impressions! Is it not saying, "*How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I make thee as Admah?*"§ Certain it is, that questions, which before only reached the ear, often now, like barbed arrows, remain fixed in the conscience—conscience, no longer stifled or amused, discovers the CONTENDER, and, trembling before him, cries, "*Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God.*"‖

* Gen. xix. 14. † Acts ii. 12, 13. ‡ Eph. v. 14. § Hosea xi. 8. ‖ Jer. xxxi. 18.

This, I say, is often the case, and should it be realized in yours, as it has been in that of your present visitor; if, instead of flying for relief to every object but God, you are brought humbly to his feet with patient submission, serious inquiry, fervent prayer, holy resolution, and firm reliance; if, in a word, by the severest stroke, the *enchantment* is also broken,—your soul *escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler*,* and returned to its proper REST; what reason will you have to say,

> Those we call *wretched* are a chosen band.
> Amid my list of blessings infinite,
> Stand this the foremost,—"*That my heart has bled.*"
> For *all* I bless thee;—most, for the *severe;*
> *Her* death,—*my own* at hand——

But death at hand (as an old writer expresses it) should be death in view, and lead us to consider next

OUR PROSPECTS from this house of sorrow, as the inhabitants of a present and future world. Many suppose that they can best contemplate the *present* world by crowding the *house of mirth;*† their whole deportment, however, shews that it makes them much too giddy for serious observation:—*having eyes, they see not.*‡

Look at the deceased, and contemplate present things. His days an *hand-breadth;*—his beauty consumed like the *moth-fretten garment;*—his cares and pleasures a *dream;* his attainments as the *grass*, which flourisheth in the morning, and in the evening is cut down and withereth;—his years a *tale;*—his strength, *labour and sorrow.*

* Psa. cxxiv. 7. † Eccl. vii. 4. ‡ Mark viii. 18.

So soon is the whole *cut off and fled*, that we cannot help repeating with the Psalmist, *Verily—every* man—at his *best* estate—is *altogether* VANITY,*—or *a vapour that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away.*†

Few, perhaps, reflect, when they follow a friend to his grave, that life itself exhibits little more than a funeral procession, where friend follows friend, weeping to-day and wept for to-morrow. While we are talking of one, another passes—we are alarmed, but behold a third! There is, however, relief in this very reflection; "My friend is gone, but am I weeping as if I were to *stay*? Is he sent for in the *morning?* in the afternoon I shall certainly be called." Inconsolable distress, therefore, may ungird our loins, may waste our hours, and cause us to make fatal mistakes in the journey, but does not bring us forward a single step towards meeting our friends in that state, where present joys and sorrows will be recollected only as the dream of a distempered night.

If, after many former admonitions, an ENEMY still urged us to climb; and, as we ascended, pointed *to the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them;*‡ if our hearts have been the dupes of the vanishing prospect, and our ears eagerly heard the proposal, "*all these things will I give thee;*§ let us now hear the voice of a FRIEND, calling us, though in an unexpected way, *to commune with our heart and be still;*‖ to know, *at least in this our day of visitation, the things which belong to our peace;*¶ and also what those things are which *hide them from our eyes.*

* Psa. xxxix. and xc.
† James iv. 14.
‡ Matt. iv. 8.
§ Matt. iv. 9.
‖ Psa. iv. 4.
¶ Luke xix. 42.

It is at such seasons as these, that we more clearly detect the lies of life. It is in the house of mourning that, what the Scripture calls lying vanities, lie peculiarly naked and exposed. Let us here examine what so lately dazzled us. What now is the *purple and fine linen** that caught our eye? What is it to fare sumptuously only for a *day?* Who is he that cries, "*Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry?*"† I trust you now feel the deep misery and utter ruin of that dying creature, who can say nothing better to his soul than *this.* You can scarcely help crying out, "What sottishness, what madness this, in a moment so interesting as life!—with a prospect so awful as eternity?"

The truth is, God speaks variously and incessantly to man respecting his prospects both present and future; but present things seize his heart, blind his eyes, stupify his conscience, and carry him away captive. Now "affliction is God speaking louder," and striving with the heart of man:—crying, as he has lately in your house, "*Arise and depart, this is not your rest; it is polluted;* and, if you persist in attempting to make a rest of it, *will destroy you with a sore destruction.*"‡

Our plan, indeed, is the very reverse of his: we love our native soil, and try to strike our roots deeper and deeper into it: firmly fixed in earth, we would fain draw our whole life, strength, and nourishment, from it. And here we should not only *fade as a leaf,*§ but, with *every tree that beareth not good fruit, be hewn down and cast into the fire,*‖ did not mercy interpose.

* Luke xvi. 19. † Luke xii. 19. ‡ Mic. ii. 10. § Isa. lxiv. 6. ‖ Mat. iii. 10.

We seldom, however, discern mercy in its *first* approach. Is it *mercy* that tears me up by the roots?—that cuts the fibres of sweetest union?—Does it prune away the finest branches? nip the loveliest buds? and cover the earth with blossoms?—Yes, verily,—since the very life of the whole often depends upon the removal of a part, mercy will wound to heal: regard to the tree will strip off its most flourishing suckers: the great Husbandman will not fail to adopt the sharpest means for the improvement of his choicest plants: *for every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.** *Though the Lord cause grief*, yet it is in *compassion*, and *according to the multitude of his mercies, for he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men;*† but soon or late instructs all his children to say, "*I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right; and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.*"‡

Let not, therefore, the change of the present scene discompose but direct us: it changes, in order to present the only unchangeable one. By thus rending the veils which men try to throw over a dying state, and discovering TEKEL§ written on every creature, the most careless are often so roused, that they seem to awake and recover themselves: they appear, for a time at least, to become *wise*, to *understand these things*, and seriously to *consider their latter end.*‖ May this salutary impression, however, my dear friend, never be worn from *your* mind, but lead you habitually to look from this fading, to that abiding prospect which is to be found

* John xv. 2. ‡ Psalm cxix. 75. ‖ Deut. xxxii. 29.
† Lam. iii. 32, 33. § *i. e.* wanting. Dan. v. 27.

only in the ETERNAL WORLD,—and on which it may be necessary here to drop a reflection or two.

I think you must often have remarked that the urgency and bustle of present things, not only raise a cloud of dust before our future prospects, but early beget a false principle that the *present life* is the only *one*. You must also have observed that ten thousand false maxims, which daily fly through the world, take their rise from this prime falsehood. Whereas, in fact, the present life, instead of being the *whole*, is comparatively *nothing;*—a *stage*, a *porch*, a *dream*, a weary day's *journey*. What is this drop to the ocean before us? What this moment to eternity? As a theatre, indeed, in which God exhibits the wonders of his providence and grace; or as a stage, on which we are to act our parts without any opportunity of repetition; the present state is infinitely grand and important: but surely no greater imposition can be put upon the pilgrim than to persuade him that he is at *home;* or to make him forget and drown his eternal interests in such a vision of the night as life.

Do you not, my dear friend, sensibly perceive this? While you sit here, does not the cloud break, and the mist subside? Have you not already so realized *a better, that is an heavenly country,** as to admire him who pitched only a *tent* here,† but steadfastly looked for *a city that hath foundations?*‡ Are you not ready *to take hold of the skirt of this Jew*, saying, "*We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you?*"§

Seeing this, you only see truths ever exhibited in the Scriptures, and living principles in all who are

* Heb. xi. 16. ‡ Heb. xi. 10. § Zech. viii. 23.
† Heb. xi. 9.

*taught of God;** for he alone can enable us to use his own discoveries; and how gracious is he, when he removes any object which might prevent our thus seeing himself, his kingdom, and his righteousness? or whose removal may prove the occasion of our *seeking* them?

Just before the flood, there were, doubtless, among their *men of renown*,† admired projectors; but there appears to have been but one *truly* wise man among them; one who saw and seriously regarded his prospects. And he, *being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.*‡ Now such a man is the Christian. He feels *the world passing away, with the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.*§ "I feel," says he, "that however finely they dress the pageant of this world, it *passeth by;*‖ to a creature like me, going, hastening, such an *ark* is worth more than ten thousand dying worlds. Let the gay laugh; *let the despisers wonder and perish;*¶ with such prospects before me, I *must* be serious. He that cannot lie has revealed the *terrors* as well as the glories of a future state: he speaks of *a worm that dieth not, and a fire that is not quenched*,** as well as of *a fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.*†† I must not, I dare not, shut my eyes against these awful realities. I will not sacrifice my soul to a jest, nor miss the single opportunity afforded me, for its salvation. He that calls for my whole heart is worthy of it: while the things which have hitherto engrossed it, though they cannot *satisfy*, I find they can *ruin it—I will there-*

* John vi. 45.
† Gen. vi. 4.
‡ Heb. xi. 7.
§ 1 John ii. 17.
‖ 1 Cor. vii. 31.
¶ Acts xiii. 41.
** Mark ix. 44.
†† Psa. xvi. 11.

fore arise and go to my Father,*—to my Saviour, who has promised to *cast out none that come unto Him*.† Yea, doubtless, *I count all things but loss, that I may be found in him*,‡ the true ARK, the only REFUGE, which God has provided for perishing sinners."

Such a man, indeed, is the *Christian*, but the Christian, after all, is but a *man*. In a state like this, he needs to be continually reminded of his own principles. Even the *wise* Virgin slumbers though the Bridegroom is at hand. But a cry is often made in the family, before that which will at midnight awaken the world: one like that in the house of Pharoah for his first-born; or that so lately heard in *yours*.—A cry, which, while it rouses the sleeper, fills his eyes with tears and his heart with pangs; often produces such views of God, of the present, and of the eternal state, as all other monitors would have attempted in vain.

Here then, my afflicted, but, I hope, instructed, friend, let us study the heavenly science of gaining by *losses*, and rising by *depressions*. Leaving the wilderness, like Moses, let us ascend the mount of scriptural discovery, and survey a prospect of which his was but a shadow.—Let us look from vicissitude and desolation to what alone is *incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away;*§ and, in the house of affliction and death, let us contemplate a house *not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*.‖ How refreshing to look from a family bereft of its companions and comforts to *Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; to an innumerable company of angels; and to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in*

* Luke xv. 18.
† John vi. 37.
‡ Philip iii. 8, 9.
§ 1 Pet. i. 4.
‖ 2 Cor. v. 1.

*heaven!**—the only family which cannot be divided:—the only friendship which shall not disappoint our warmest expectation.

Glorious as this prospect is, (perhaps you are ready to reply) "I have been long in the habit of viewing it very indistinctly. My attention has been so fixed on one below, that I live looking *into* the grave rather than *beyond* it. My spirits are so broken, my heart so wounded, and my eyes so dim with watching and weeping, that I can hardly read what is before me, or recollect what I read. If serious reflection composes me for a few moments, I soon relapse, and seem to lose sight of every support. I indeed severely feel what you say concerning the *present* life, but I view the glories of the *future* like a starving creature, who, looking through the gate of the wealthy, surveys a plenty which but increases his anguish."

There is, however, this difference, at least, between your cases; the plenty which *you* see is *yours*, if you are really willing to accept it. You never received a gift which was so freely bestowed, or so suited to your necessity, as that *gift of God*, which is *eternal life through Jesus Christ.*† In order to view this more distinctly, let us consider the sufficiency of

OUR PROVISIONS—For *Wisdom hath built her house, she hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, and furnished her table. She also crieth upon the highest places of the city, "Whoso is simple let him turn in hither;" and to him that wanteth understanding she saith, "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled; forsake the foolish and live."*‡

* Heb. xii. 22, 23. † Rom. vi. 23. ‡ Prov. ix. 1—6.

Man, indeed, is daily reminded by the thorns at his feet, by the sweat of his brow, and by the dust to which he is returning, that his paradise is *lost:** but paradise *regained* is considered rather as an idea; a subject for poetry. That book, however, which I hope you have chosen as your best companion in the house of mourning, like the vision of Jacob, not only shews the heavens opened, but discovers a gracious medium of communication and intercourse, as it were *a ladder let down from heaven to earth.*† A medium so suited to the state of man, that the weakest and vilest, who is humble enough to take hold of it as God's ordinance; advance a step at a time; and call for strength to proceed; may climb by it from earth to Heaven.‡

Are you, my dear friend, among the number of those, who stand before God not only as stript of their *comforts*, but humbled under sin as the cause of all the desolations with which our fallen state abounds? Open your book at the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah: you will there perceive the most precious privilege of Paradise restored: the Creator descending to the condition and wants of his creature, and once more holding *communion* with him. The *broken-hearted*, the *captive*, and the *mourner*, are here shewn One mighty to save and to relieve: and, that such should not mistake their friend, when our Lord stood up in the synagogue to read, he selected this passage, and, having read it, he closed the book with saying, "*This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.*"§ "I am, as if he had said, this Deliverer and *Desire of nations;*‖ *the same yesterday, to-day,*

* Gen. iii. 18, 19. ‡ Compare Genesis xxviii. with John i. 51.
† Gen. xxviii. 12. § Luke iv. 21. ‖ Hag. ii. 7.

*and forever:** *blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted:*†—*blessed are ye that hunger now; for ye shall be filled:—blessed are ye that weep now; for ye shall laugh.*"‡

I scarcely need observe that, in an address like this, (a bow drawn at a venture) formal statements of the different topics would be improper; and, therefore, I shall not attempt to describe, in their order, the various provisions comprehended in that scheme of redemption, usually termed the Gospel. It may be necessary, however, to remark, that the whole is a proposal to the *broken heart*, answering all its objections, and meeting all its wants: and that such a proposal will be cordially received only in proportion as this disposition prevails.

As it is the *sick* who best knows how to value a physician, the *debtor* a surety, and the *criminal* a pardon; so it is the awakened conscience alone which will embrace a constitution calculated to humble the *pride*, and mortify the *corruptions*, as well as relieve the *wants*, of man. If *without shedding of blood there can be no remission*,§ he, who is earnest to obtain it, will rejoice to find it though on *the accursed tree:* and, however the *preaching of this cross* shall be esteemed *foolishness among them that perish*,‖ such an one will not only rejoice in the provision, but magnify the means. "*God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*"¶

Our Lord represents the blessings of his kingdom under the parable of a magnificent feast, which a *king*

* Heb. xiii. 8. † Matt. v. 4. ‡ Luke vi. 21. § Heb. ix. 22. ‖ 1 Cor. i. 18. ¶ Gal. vi. 14.

made for the marriage of his son; but when *all things were ready*, and invitations repeatedly sent, he points out the ruin of the world in its indisposition to accept his gracious proposal. *They made light of it*, and went *their ways!* However different their pursuits, they all agreed to reject the invitation; they began with *one consent* to make excuse: some urged reasons, and some abused the messengers; but what is this more than the history of human nature in every age?*

Let us, however, my dear friend, never forget that the gate lately mentioned, though strait, is *open;* and that only *unbelief* and *indisposition* stand without. Christ has declared that all things are *ready;* may his gracious influence, accompanying this humbling providence, form in you a spiritual taste for them! Certain I am, that whenever this is attained, his *name* will be *as ointment poured forth;*†—it will give a savour even to obsolete poetry.

Christ is a path—if any be misled;
He is a robe—if any naked be;
If any chance to hunger—he is bread;
If any be a bondman—he is free;
If any be but weak—how strong is he!
To dead men life he is; to sick men health;
To blind men sight; and to the needy wealth;
A pleasure without loss; a treasure without stealth.

To prepare the heart for the reception of this treasure, as a God of order, he is pleased to use a system of means; one of which I hope he is now employing for your soul's health. I love to indulge hope, for affliction is a seed time; and let me freely inquire, since God has called you aside, has spoken so emphatically, and you

* Matt. xxii. 1—6. † Cant. i. 3.

have had leisure for serious meditation, do not the provisions of the Gospel appear new, sufficient, and exactly suited to your case? Do you not mark that gold which the thief cannot steal? that foundation which no tempest can shake? that life over which death hath no power? and that peace which the world can neither give nor take away? Does not the religion of JESUS, that is so forgotten and degraded among men, stand forward now as the *one thing needful?* Does not his friendship appear now to be *that better part* which *shall not be taken away;** and which alone can help in extremities? In the wreck of human affairs, indeed, it is that God often makes his truth appear; and causes his gospel, (like a plank thrown out to the perishing mariner) to be properly known and prized.

"These are the great occasions which force the mind to take refuge in religion: When we have no help in ourselves, what can remain but that we look up to a higher and a greater Power? and to what hope may we not raise our eyes and hearts, when we consider that the GREATEST *Power is the* BEST?"

"Surely there is no [truly wise] man who, thus afflicted, does not seek succour in the gospel which has brought *life and immortality to light.* The precepts of EPICURUS, who teaches us to endure what the laws of the universe make necessary, may silence, but not *content* us. The dictates of ZENO, who commands us to look with indifference on external things, may dispose us to conceal our sorrow, but cannot *assuage* it. Real alleviation of the loss of friends, and rational tranquillity in the prospect of our own dissolution, can be

* Luke x. 42.

received only from the promises of Him in whose hands are life and death, and from the assurances of another and better state, in which all tears will be wiped from the eyes, and the whole soul shall be filled with joy. Philosophy may infuse STUBBORNNESS, but religion only can give PATIENCE."*

In health and ease, ingenious speculations may amuse and satisfy us; but I think you now feel, with me, that when He *takes away the desire of our eyes with a stroke*,† our sorrows are too deep to be alleviated by the mere orator or philosopher; we even turn in disgust from him who would thus trifle with our case; we need a support the world cannot afford. "I faint," says the wounded soul: "I want an almighty arm to lean on now; yea, a very tender and compassionate one too;—one like that of the Son of man. I need a *merciful and faithful high priest, who, having been tempted, knows how to succour the tempted;*‡—that man of sorrows, that brother born for adversity, who, being *acquainted with grief*, can enter into my case, and commune with me in all the peculiarities of my distress. I now need one, who can quiet me on his own breast, and speak to me with his *own voice, Weep not, the child is not dead, but sleepeth.*§ *Weep not, thou afflicted, tossed with tempest,—when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee.*‖ It is true, this is the land of death, but *I am the resurrection and the life;*¶—this is, indeed, a *dry and thirsty land where no water is;*** but I will lead you to *fountains of living waters:* I will *wipe away all tears from your eyes.*"††

* Johnson.
† Ezek. xxiv. 16.
‡ Heb. ii. 17, 18.
§ Luke viii. 52.
‖ Isa. xliii. 2.
¶ John xi. 25.
** Psa. lxiii. 1.
†† Rev. vii. 17.

You are ready, perhaps, to say, "O that I knew where I might find him;"—but religion has been with me rather a case of necessity than the high privilege of communing with such a comforter. I feel the misery of living at such a distance from my heavenly Friend, (especially at this time) but want liberty to approach nearer:—Could I, indeed, repose on the bosom you just mentioned—"but, alas! my understanding is clouded, my faith weak, sense strong, and Satan busy in filling my thoughts with false notions, difficulties, and doubts respecting a future state, and the efficacy of prayer."* Though I see very gracious proposals made to returning sinners, I tremble to venture:—Death itself reminds me of transgression:—My thoughts fly every where but to God.

We readily acknowledge that among other views of death, it should be regarded as the *wages of sin*.† It is also natural for convinced sinners to tremble before a Judge who charges even angels with folly.—However Pride may boast, or Ignorance presume, he who measures by the standard of a law which is so spiritual as to regard a corrupt desire, will conclude with the apostle, that *every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God*.‡ A view of the divine character, and of his own, led not only a publican to smite upon his breast, as the seat of apostacy and pollution, and cry, "*God be merciful to me a sinner*,"§ but so perfect and upright a man as Job to *abhor himself*, and repent *in dust and ashes*:‖ I may add that, as *we* become proficients in their school, we shall be more

* Lady Russell's Letters.
† Rom. vi. 23.
‡ Rom. iii. 19.
§ Luke xviii. 13.
‖ Job xlii. 6.

ready to *confess* than to *complain;*—we shall learn to justify God in any instance of his righteous displeasure; and humbly own, that he has laid upon us far less than our iniquities deserve.*

But while the Christian, as a penitent, looks upon him whom he has pierced and *mourns;* as a believer, he looks at him who was wounded for transgression, and *hopes*—He finds it as desperate to doubt the *remedy*, as to deny the *disorder*.—Having formerly rushed headlong with the *presumptuous*, he now fears perishing with the *fearful* and *unbelieving*.† He sees an atonement of God's own providing; he pleads upon God's own authority the merit of that blood *which cleanseth from all sin;*‡ and by thus receiving *the record which God gives of his Son, he sets his seal to it that God is true.*§

Is this, my dear friend, in any degree your case?—Fearful, wandering, and wounded as your heart is, does it yet discover a resting place?—Instead of wishing to evade the charge of "manifold sins and wickedness committed by thought, word and deed, against the Divine Majesty: is the remembrance of them grievous, and the burthen of them intolerable?" Do you sincerely desire to be freed from this burden, and to enter into the glorious liberty of the children of God? that heavenly communion and rest which has been mentioned? *Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!*‖—*Behold him exalted to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins!*¶—Come to him as a sinner, and touch, with humble confidence, but

* Psalm ciii. 10.
† Rev. xxi. 8.
‡ 1 John i. 7.
§ John iii. 33.
‖ John i. 29.
¶ Acts v. 31.

the *hem of his garment*, and you shall be *made whole:**—Wait upon him, and you shall obtain both strength and liberty; *for if the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed.*†

Respecting your sense of weakness, let me add that *provision* made for fallen nature, corresponding to its various wants, is at once a *character* and an *evidence* of our religion. It is a glorious peculiarity of it, that its *promises* correspond with its *precepts.* To use the language which best conveys its meaning, *The kingdom of God is not in* WORD only, *but also in* POWER.‡—He who enlightens the blind eyes, undertakes to *strengthen the weak hands, and to confirm the feeble knees.*§ The Spirit of wisdom and understanding is said to be also a spirit of *might*, of *grace*, and of *supplication.*‖ It is peculiar to *our* teacher that he *enables* as well as instructs his disciples: he first presents a *prospect* of the inheritance, then a *title* to it through his death, and together with these, affords *strength* to rise and pursue it.—Turn to the thirty-sixth chapter of Ezekiel, and you will find your case amply provided for,¶ but recollect that it is added, "*I will yet for this be inquired of, to do it for them.*** *Is any afflicted? let him pray.*"††

But I must not pass by the temptation you mentioned with respect to the efficacy of prayer: you will, perhaps, too readily object, "Here it is that I sink; I prayed earnestly for the life of the deceased; I thought at one time I saw signs of a recovery, but the event makes

* Matt. ix. 21.
† John viii. 36.
‡ 1 Cor. iv. 20.
§ Isa. xxxv. 3—6.
‖ Compare Zech. xii. 10. with Eph. i. 19.
¶ Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27.
** Ezek. xxxvi. 37.
†† James v. 13.

me fear that I was not heard, and that I have no FRIEND left now in earth or Heaven."

A little consideration will, I hope, shew you your mistake, and prove that a petition may be graciously accepted, when its particular object is not granted. Did not our LORD declare that his Father heard him always?* Are we not told that when *in the days of his flesh he had offered up prayers, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save him from death, he was* HEARD *in that he feared?*† But consider, I pray you, how he was heard: Certainly not by having the cup *taken away*, (a cup at which human nature, however perfect, must recoil) but in being accepted when he prayed; in being supported while he drank it; and in victoriously accomplishing his grand design through drinking it to the very dregs.

To come nearer to our own condition, we find St. PAUL going to CHRIST for deliverance from some severe trial which he calls a *thorn in the flesh;* he tells us that he also was heard, and in the same way as his Master; not by being released from suffering, but by receiving something more honourable and advantageous; namely, that *grace* which not only supports a believer through his trials, but puts a healing virtue into them.

Far removed from the holy resignation of our Master, we too much resemble, in our prayers, the impatience of our children. I remember when a sick one of mine has had some medicine to take, he has called loudly to me to come and assist him against those who were endeavouring to force it down: he, probably, wondered at my refusing to relieve him; but the little sufferer did

* John xi. 42. † Heb. v. 7.

not consider, though often told, that he was not to be helped in that way; he did not recollect, that while I tenderly felt his cry, the very compassion I felt for him, and the desire I had to relieve him, kept me from taking away the bitter draught.

The truth is (and it is a truth frequently told to us) that our heavenly Father always sends his children the things they ask or better things. He answers their petitions in *kind* or in *kindness.* But while we think only of our *ease*, He consults our *profit:*—We are urgent about the *body*, He about the *soul:* We call for present *comfort*, He considers our everlasting *rest:* and, therefore, when he sends not the very things we ask, he hears us by sending greater *than we can ask or think.**

Is any, therefore, *afflicted? let him pray;* not only in the public sanctuary, or in the retired closet, but let him consider that there is *a new and living way consecrated through the vail*† of a Redeemer's human nature, from every scene of retirement or action, to a MERCY SEAT; where he *satisfies the longing soul*, and fills the *hungry soul with goodness;* especially *such as sit in darkness and the shadow of death.*‡—Our very misery and infirmity should, in defect of other preachers, point out the seat of our relief; and direct such frail and depraved creatures to the common friend of the *weary* and *heavy laden.* Pouring into his bosom all our complaints, we at once obey his command, honour his character, and obtain his assistance: *for we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but* was *in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of Grace, that*

* Eph. iii. 20. † Heb. x. 20. ‡ Psa. cvii. 9, 10.

*we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.**

Is it not a time of need with you? endeavour, at his command, to approach with an holy confidence, for the *supply of all your need according to his riches in glory;*† and, at this time particularly, for the illumination and comfort of his Holy Spirit. He whom you supplicate not only *invites*, but *reasons* with you. "*If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.*"‡

The religion of education and custom obtains, more or less, every where; but serious, vital, spiritual religion is *a case of necessity* with us all. We summon our forces, we ransack our stores, we *spend our money for that which is not bread, and our labour for that which satisfieth not;*§ we look every way, and call to every thing, till each in return loudly replies, "*It is not in me.*"‖ Well, indeed, will it be, if, after all our fruitless efforts, we are brought to feel that the provisions of the Gospel are the only *bread* for a hungry soul, the only *balm* for a wounded heart.

However foreign, my dear friend, these truths were from your consideration when we first sat down together, if it shall please Him, who *commanded the light to shine out of darkness,*¶ to shine into your heart, and effectually discover the *exceeding riches of his Grace* in these provisions; then, though *you* sit weeping over your loss, we are assured from unquestionable authority, that angels are rejoicing** for your unspeakable gain.

* Heb. iv. 15, 16.
† Philip. iv. 19.
‡ Luke xi. 13.
§ Isa. lv. 1.
‖ Job xxviii. 14.
¶ 2 Cor. iv. 6.
** Luke xv. 10.

We are certain also, that not only every *real* friend will cry, "*This day is salvation come to the house** where we lately wept;" but that, drying your tears, you yourself will be compelled to express your grateful sense of the correction you now deplore, and sing, with a companion and fellow-proficient in the school of affliction,†

Father, I bless thy gentle hand;
How kind was thy chastising rod
That forc'd my conscience to a stand,
And brought my wand'ring soul to God!

Foolish and vain, I went astray
Ere I had felt thy scourges, Lord;
I left my guide—I lost my way;
But now I love and keep thy word.

And here, suffer me to drop a word or two respecting these

OUR COMPANIONS in the house of mourning. Society is peculiarly pleasant when we are benighted on a journey: and especially that of a citizen of the place to which we are going. It is encouraging to travel with those, who are convinced, that if *they are chastened of the Lord*, it is *that they should not be condemned with the world.*‡ *Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven:*§ and here they are educating for it. Here they sit at the foot of the Cross, and receive lessons of faith and patience, of humility and temperance.

Blessed also *are the pure in heart; for they* here *see God;*‖ who never so unveils himself as in seasons of distress. In sight of his character and word, they bow

* Luke xix. 9.
† Psa. cxix. 67—71.
‡ 1 Cor. xi. 32.
§ Matt. v. 3.
‖ Matt. v. 8.

before his providence, yea, trust him in the stroke; for hope is made to arise here, as light in darkness. Here the spiritual husbandman is taught to *go forth weeping, and bearing the precious seed* of faith and love, penitence and prayer; assured *that he shall come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him.** Here also the heavenly scholar acquires *the tongue of the learned, that he should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.*† And here the true soldier of Jesus Christ is found *fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold of eternal life*‡ in the very valley and shadow of death.—He is here instructed to *cast down imaginations,*§ those reasonings which peculiarly infest and darken the house of mourning; and taking the *shield of faith, and the sword of the spirit,* he *wrestles not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers*‖—a mighty though secret conflict which God shall one day declare to the world; and which, when explained, will leave its most celebrated heroes *silent in darkness.*¶

"*Go thy way forth by the footsteps of thy flock,*"** for in this house they all have left the prints of their feet. Here stood Jacob weeping over his beloved Rachel;†† and here Aaron deplored his sons.‡‡ Here we trace the steps of David going up to his chamber, and crying with a loud voice, "*Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son! my son!*§§ and those of Ezekiel, who, forbidden to cry, silently resigned *the desire of his eyes* to the stroke.‖‖ But enumeration is vain: hither came all the sons of God, the only-begotten not

* Psa. cxxvi. 6.
† Isa. l. 4.
‡ 1 Tim. vi. 12.
§ 2 Cor. x. 5.
‖ Eph. vi. 12—16, 17.
¶ 1 Sam. ii. 9.
** Cant. i. 8.
†† Gen. xxxv. 20.
‡‡ Lev. x. 3.
§§ 2 Sam. xviii. 33.
‖‖ Ezek. xxiv. 16.

excepted, for JESUS himself stood *and wept* at the grave of a friend.*

With such company, is it not far *better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting?*†—I knew one of these, *a man who had seen affliction by a rod*‡ like yours;—a man who walked and wept in solitude, but with no expectation of being overheard. There is something sacred in grief, and we cannot listen to its effusions with too much candour: great candour, indeed, is here required, but, if afforded, it may procure you at least, a *companion*, as you pass through this vale of tears.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

—"*Set thee up way-marks;*§ I desire here to set them up, and to record the severest of my visitations in the house of my pilgrimage. Lord, prepare me for the next!"

"I perceive I could not have properly sympathized with a friend in a similar case before this stroke. I could not have *understood* it.

"I have, at times, so felt the importance of eternal things, that I thought the loss of any present comfort would be tolerable:—but I had no idea how much depended on being *ready*, when the Son of man came in such a providence."

"I feel I now stand in the right position to see the *world* and the *word;*—they both appear under aspects entirely new."

"When I find 'my joys packed up and gone;' my heart slain; the delight of my eyes taken away;—when I recollect who is gone before her, who is following, and what remains for the world to offer; my heart cries

* John xi. 35. ‡ Lam. iii. 1. § Jer. xxxi. 21.
† Eccl. vii. 2.

*I loathe it, I would not live always;**—I thank God that I am also to go."

" I perceive I did not know how much my life was bound up in the life of a creature: when *she* went, nothing seemed left: one is not; and the rest seem a few thin and scattered remains."

" And yet how much better for my lamb to be suddenly housed, to slip unexpectedly into the fold to which I was conducting her, than remain exposed here?—perhaps become a victim?"

" I cried, ' O Lord, spare my child!'—he did—but not as I meant; he snatched it from danger, and took it to his own home."

" I have often prayed, ' Lord, soften my heart! humble my pride! destroy my levity!' I knew enough of his way to fear the *means;* and he has, in mercy towards me, regarded my *soul* more than my *feelings.*"

" I prayed earnestly for her life: duty compelled me to say, ' *Thy will be done,*'—but I *meant* nothing."

" O my God, how long hast thou come *seeking fruit on this tree?*†—how much hast thou done to cultivate it?—shall it still remain fruitless? shall it be cut down after all?"

" My passions forged impressions that she would live; but I now plainly perceive I am called to regard *God* and not *impressions.*"

" I have been long like one in a fever, attended at times with a strong delirium: I begged hard that I might not be bled, but he meant a cure, and pierced my heart."

" O how slender, how brittle, the thread on which hang all my earthly joys!"

* Job. vii. 16. † Luke xiii. 7.

" I wish ever to be asking, 'Am I ready, should he send again and take * * *, or * * *, or myself?'—*Setting my house in order** will not make death approach sooner; but, that it will render his coming much *easier*, I feel by sad experience."

" When I pass by the blaze of dissipation and intemperance, I feel a moment's relief. I say to my heart, 'Be still;'—at least she is not left to follow these *ignes fatui:* how much better is even the grave for my T——, than *the end of these things*?"†

" It is vain for me to wish, as I have done, to leave the world and go to my Father, that I might inquire into the whole of the case;—the reasons, the steps, the issue, &c. In a short time I shall—but he says enough *now*, if I have ears to hear."

" In the mean time, help me, O my God and Father, to recollect that I received this drop of earthly comfort from a spring which still remains! help me to feel that nothing *essential* is altered! *for with thee is the fountain of life:*‡—part of myself is already gone to thee, help what remains to follow." * * * * * * * *

If this humble attempt to improve your affliction has been attended with any success, you will readily admit a few concluding hints with respect to

OUR DUTY in such circumstances. And one of the first, and principal duties of the state, is, as hath been expressed, to ACKNOWLEDGE GOD in it. It was charged upon some, that they *returned not to him that smote them*, nor *sought the Lord*§ in their distress. On the contrary, the clear apprehension Job had of a divine hand in his afflictions, is as instructive as his patience un-

* Isa. xxxviii. 1. ‡ Psa. xxxvi. 9. § Isa. ix. 13.
† Rom. vi. 21.

der them. While Grief *rent his mantle*, Faith *fell down and worshipped*—"*The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.*"* Let us learn from him never to lose sight of the *Author*, by an undue regard to the mere *circumstances* of our loss. We may think and speak of the symptoms and stages of the late removal;—of the physicians, of the remedies, &c. in their supposed right or wrong application; but not so as to forget that an unerring Providence presided over the whole, yea, actually *conducted* every part on reasons as righteous as inscrutable.

Whatever may appear to *us* peculiar in the sick chamber, the whole was but God's intended method of removing one, who had lived his *full* (i. e. his *appointed*) time. *Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months is with thee: thou hast appointed him his bounds which he cannot pass.*† Instead of fixing our attention upon means and creatures, of which we know so very little, let us turn to Him who wrought by these instruments, and merely effected his own determinations by them. *Cease from man, for wherein is he to be accounted of*?‡ Let not the creature hide the Creator, nor present things remain the fatal screen of the future; but, in every occurrence, mark the Great Cause, *of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things:*§ who numbereth the *very hairs of our head*, and without whom even a *sparrow falls not to the ground.*‖

While others, therefore, are wandering without an object, and bereaved without a comforter, yea, are going to their worst enemies for relief, let us endeavour to say with Peter, "Lord, *to whom shall we go*¶ but to

* Job. i. 21. † Job. xiv. 5, 6. ‡ Isa. ii. 22. § Rom. xi. 36. ‖ Matt. x. 29, 30. ¶ John vi. 68.

THEE?" Consider the great Physician as now proposing a most serious question to your conscience, "*Wilt thou be made whole?*"* May the language of your heart be that of the apostle's, "If by *any* means;"† then, though seemingly swallowed up of this grief, like Jonah, you shall find a resource *in* it, and finally be preserved *by* it.‡—This dart, like that which once pierced an imposthume in battle, shall bring health with its wound; and you shall be enabled, with many that are gone before you, to say, "*The Lord hath chastened me sore, but he hath not given me over unto death.*§

Duty also directs you to MODERATE YOUR GRIEF. Our heavenly Father, who *knows our frame, and remembers that we are but dust,*‖ allows us to mourn when he afflicts us; he often, in his providence, calls us to it, and charges us to *weep with them that weep:*¶ but he admonishes us also of a danger on each hand. "*My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.*"** If we seriously profess Christianity, our very profession implies, (not only a subjection to our Lord's will, but) that we have special resources in our affliction; several of which have been already named: that, among other of our privileges, there is *a peace from God which passeth all understanding, to keep our hearts and minds*†† through life and death; and that we have many reasons for *not sorrowing as others who have no hope.*‡‡ Besides which, Christians have a post of honor to maintain: an *high calling*§§ to demonstrate and commend: we shall (like the pilot in a storm) be brought to our principles; and, *as sorrowful, yet al-*

* John v. 6.
† Philip. iii. 11.
‡ Jonah ii. 7—10.
§ Psa. cxviii. 18.
‖ Psa. ciii. 14.
¶ Rom. xii. 15.
** Heb. xii. 5.
†† Philip. iv. 7.
‡‡ Thes. iv. 13.
§§ Philip. iii. 14.

ways rejoicing,* should prove that we have them not now to learn.

On the contrary, there is such a thing as nursing and cherishing our grief; employing a "busy meddling memory to muster up past endearments," and personate a vast variety of tender and heart-rending circumstances. There is a tearing open the wound afresh by images and remembrances, and thereby multiplying those pangs which constitute the very bitterness of death itself. Our melancholy exceedingly effects this voluntary torture;—it seeks expedients, and will listen to the most unjust and aggravated accusations which can approach a tender conscience respecting the deceased. But conscience should rather be concerned to repress such a disposition. It is a temptation.—It desperately strives to retain what God has determined to remove:—in some cases, it seeks to penetrate an abyss he forbids even conjecture to explore: and, while it unfits the mourner for the pressing duties of his station, it leads to that *sorrow of the world which worketh death*† to his body, soul, and Christian character. How different and superior the sentiments of DAVID! *His servants said unto him, "What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child while it was alive, but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread." And he said, "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live; but now he is dead, wherefore should I fast?—can I bring him back again?—*I SHALL GO TO HIM, BUT HE SHALL NOT RETURN TO ME.‡

* 2 Cor. vi. 10. † 2 Cor. vii. 10. ‡ 2 Sam. xii. 21—23.

Present circumstances also admonish you to KNOW YOUR OPPORTUNITY, and to improve this season as peculiarly favourable for spiritual advancement. There is a *tide* in the concerns of religion; the scripture calls it the *day of visitation*,* and sends us to the *stork* and to the *swallow*† for instruction respecting it. Your heart is now soft, its fascinations withdrawn, and the call loud and affecting; endeavour, therefore, to take the benefit of a remedy you feel so expensive.

If, in a sense, "Smitten friends are angels sent on errands full of love," instead of weeping over their tombs, let us listen to the voice which properly arises from them; especially if it be our privilege to bury one who, like Abel, *being dead, yet speaketh*‡, and who would be ready to say to his mourners, "*Weep not for me, but for yourselves and for your children*,§—*I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith*,‖ and received my crown. I cannot now come to weep with you, but you may ascend and rejoice with me, where there is *no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, for the former things are passed away.*¶ If you truly love me, prepare to follow me. If you earnestly wish to see me again, seek not the living among the dead; but arise, and become *a follower of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*** Take that heavenly lamp, which *shineth as a light in a dark place;* walk humbly by it *till the day dawn, and the day star arise in your heart.*†† Haste, my beloved, towards the things which *eye hath not seen;*‡‡ and, ere the eternal day break, and the present shadows flee away, *run with*

* Luke xix. 44. § Luke xxiii. 28. ** Heb. vi. 1, 2.
† Jer. viii. 7. ‖ 2 Tim. iv. 7. †† 2 Pet. i. 19.
‡ Heb. xi. 4. ¶ Rev. xxi. 4. ‡‡ 1 Cor. ii. 9.

*patience the race set before you, looking unto Jesus.**—How will my cup overflow to meet you among those who daily *come hither out of great tribulation:* and, having *washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, serve him day and night in his temple!*"†

Embrace every method God hath recommended for maintaining communion with him, and obtaining relief from him—The various ordinances of his house, the encouragements of his word, the society of his children, and, especially, prayer. Often speak to Him who *seeth in secret,*‡ and *is nigh unto all that call unto him,*§ though, with the woman of Canaan, you can only say, "*Lord, help me.*"‖ Not only an high commendation, but a miracle followed her request. She urged it under the greatest discouragements, but you have both a command and a promise, "*Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*¶

And, while you search the Scriptures and attend the Church, you will at once be instructed and encouraged by marking in both, those footsteps which we lately considered. They are, indeed, not so explicit in the latter, but attention to the scriptural account of the Christian character, will greatly assist you in distinguishing real Christians from those who equally forward and corrupt, have at all times assumed their name, and mixed in their society, to their grief and scandal.**—Leaving these unhappy *exceptions* to their proper Judge, follow the unerring *Rule* he has put into your hand, and those who walk by it; particularly, such as are your companions in affliction. You will see them passing

* Heb. xii. 1, 2.
† Rev. vii. 14, 15.
‡ Matt. vi. 18.
§ Psa. cxlv. 18.
‖ Matt. xv. 23.
¶ Psa. l. 15.
** Philip. iii. 18, 19.

before you with not only the same wounds in their hearts, but almost the same words on their lips. Study their course; mark their progress; observe how they held his arm, pleaded at his throne, reposed in his bosom, and magnified his truth, who walked with them in a furnace which, like that of the three children, burnt nothing but their bonds.*

"But who is sufficient for these things?"

A fourth direction will serve for a reply. To improve the opportunity you discern, and to keep pace with those you approve, SEEK DIVINE ASSISTANCE; or, as St. Paul has expressed it, "*Be strong in the grace that is in Jesus Christ.*"† If, on the one hand, Religion has vast proposals to make; on the other, to be truly religious is a mighty aim, and can be accomplished only *through* HIM *that loved us.*‡ Opposing Omnipotence to difficulty, was their *secret*, who so gloriously overcame a world that was not worthy of them: read their history in the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews, and see what an implicit reliance, called Faith,—a *seeing Him, who is invisible*, will perform. That invaluable record seems to say, "*Our Fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.*"§

We are, indeed, called to *aim* and to *act*, and have the greatest promises annexed to the endeavour: but are as frequently reminded that *we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves*, but that *our sufficiency is of God.*‖ Christ encourages no one to advance on the ground of his own strength, any more

* Dan. iii. 25. ‡ Rom. viii. 37. ‖ 2 Cor. iii. 5.
† 2 Tim. ii. 1. § Psa. xxii. 4, 5.

than on that of his own *desert:* he is as jealous of the power of his arm as of the merit of his blood. He admitted infirmity and misery to be presented as a *complaint*, but never as an *objection.* I have observed it not uncommon, for this to be a season of peculiar temptation; a spiritual enemy stands ready to defeat every spiritual opportunity: but our help is near, and our example, in such conflicts, excellent.—*For this thing I besought the Lord thrice:—and he said unto me*, "*My* GRACE *is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*" May you be enabled to add with the apostle, "*Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest on me.*"*

Again, that you may seek cheerfully this assistance, REGARD YOUR ENCOURAGEMENTS. To recover our alienated minds, and gain our confidence, God meets us in a way suited to our necessities, and to our fears. Resist, as the vilest temptation, any doubt of that *good will to man*, which was sung at the Redeemer's birth. What hath God not done in order to commend his love? By every expression of tender concern, he, in the person of a *man of sorrows*, invites the guilty, the weary, the trembling and the tempted, to come unto him; assuring them that he will neither *break the bruised reed*, nor *quench the smoaking flax.*†

If *God is love*,‡ "Christ is God stooping to the senses, and speaking to the heart of man:" ever saying, "Look to my cross, take my yoke, and lean upon my arm, and ye shall find rest." He sought the house of mourning to comfort the sisters of Lazarus: he met a

* 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. † Matt. xii. 20. ‡ 1 John iv. 16.

widow following her only child, and, *when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her,* "*Weep not.*"* May he meet you at this time, my dear friend, with consolations which none but himself can afford: and then, at the very grave, shall that saying be brought to pass, "*Death is swallowed up in victory.*"† Let those fear, who despise our heavenly *Friend*, our *prospects*, *provisions*, *companions*, and sense of *duty:* God with us, and all things in God, is light in darkness, life in death. The words which revived him, who styles himself *your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ*,‡ remain to cheer a solitude darker (if possible) than his. "*Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen: and have the keys of hell and of death.*"§

To conclude:—The late event solemnly repeats its author's charge "BE YE ALSO READY."‖ Your friend is gone: your following is certain: it may be sudden; it may be next. But should it take place this night, and find you provided with nothing better for the change than the miserable subterfuges of the profane, or the scarcely less miserable supports of the formal, what an alarm (if you are not left to the most affecting delusion or stupidity) will it occasion! What an awful transition, to pass from the SAVIOUR to the JUDGE! Without love to him; without even an acquaintance with him; unwilling, unreconciled, unrenewed! And to Him who has often invited you, warned you, and, at times, affected your conscience with the truths we have been

* Luke vii. 23. ‡ Rev. i. 9. ‖ Matt. xxiv. 44.
† 1 Cor. xv. 54. § Rev. i. 17, 18.

considering!—What a subject for eternal reflection, "*You would not come to him that you might have life!*"*

God forbid, however, that this should be *your* case! I only suppose it, lest it should; and it is too common to render the supposition improper. From such a danger we cannot be too secure; and, therefore, having lately seen how soon *the night cometh when no man can work*,† let us seek *to-day*, in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, that peace and safety which you must be conscious can never be found OUT of it, and which it may be too late to seek to-morrow.

Some things belonging to our important change are wisely hid from us; nothing, however, is more plain than that it is *near*, and therefore demands our most serious attention: that it is finally *decisive*,‡ and therefore warns us to watch against those errors, which eternity cannot rectify; and, that the hour is *uncertain*, and, therefore, calls us to stand prepared. With our *loins girded*, and our *lights burning*, may we thus wait for our Lord!

Impressed with such views, I have often wished to take the afflicted by the hand, and lead them to a resource their passions have obscured. I have wished them to see that the Christian hope is then most alive and full of immortality, when every other hope perishes. These wishes, and the request of a friend, (who was solicitous to obtain something of this kind more compendious than he had yet seen) have drawn from me some imperfect hints. Imperfect, however, as they are, like a few words, presented by the road's side to the eye of a weary traveller, they may afford you some present

* John v. 40. † John ix. 4. ‡ Matt. xxv. 46.

direction and relief. And should he, who is pleased to employ the feeblest means in his greatest work, conduct you by them, (though but a single step on your way) towards a *morning without clouds*—a *house* without *mourning*, the service of your affectionate friend will obtain a high reward.

EXTRACT FROM A DISCOURSE

BY THE LATE EDWARD HARWOOD, D. D.

I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them who are asleep, that you sorrow not even as others who have no hope.—1 *Thes.* iv. 13.

THE Gospel was intended to disperse all gloom from the human heart, and from human life. The religion of Jesus opens to the mourner not the *blackness of darkness*, and the friendless shades of despair, but the cheerfulness of hope, and the joyful prospect of immortality. The Gospel of Jesus carries the believer's view beyond the present limited scene of things—draws aside the veil that *once* intervened between time and eternity, and gives the mourner, in this world, such a glorious, triumphant, boundless view of the regions of immortality, as cannot but make him ashamed of indulging an immoderate sorrow for any earthly creature, how near and dear soever, when he shall so soon meet it in those blessed abodes, and part no more. The Thessalonians, to whom St. Paul writes, had lost some of their Christian friends by death. The mourners, it seems, wrote to the Apostle, and, which is the first dictate of the heart upon such distressing occasions, when the mind is overwhelmed in grief and sorrow, desired the Apostle to suggest some arguments to consolate them in this afflictive dispensation. What does the blessed Apostle write in answer to this?—He delivers those words to them, which he repeats to us, and to all future ages, for their and our comfort and consolation in these mournful

scenes; *I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that you sorrow not as others who have no hope: for*, he adds, *if we*, Christians, *believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them, also*, WHO SLEEP *in Jesus, will God bring with him.* Your deceased friends, who have fallen asleep in Jesus, and died in the belief, and principles, and hopes of his religion, are not lost—their sleeping dust, which you drench with your tears, will one day be inspired with new life—be collected to form a *piritual body*—and be presented along with you, in the presence of God, with exceeding great and mutual joy to each other. Christians, who live and die in the full assurance of the evangelical doctrine of a glorious resurrection to eternal life, are not to *sorrow as those who have no hope*—are not to brood over a cheerless, despairing, melancholy prospect. This is both being ungrateful to God, and unjust to their religion. The grand doctrine of their religion is a glorious and happy immortality. This is the distinguishing glory of the Christian religion—the great first fundamental truth it was propagated in this world to teach—the grand capital principle, with which it was designed to inspire its professors. That Christian, therefore, who does not suffer this great and transporting TRUTH to take the full possession of his soul, and to shed all that powerful influence upon his conduct and heart it was intended to have, is still to learn what it is to be a Christian—hath not yet felt the native power, and force, and efficacy of the Gospel's motives, and the Gospel's first and primary design.

The Gospel does not offer men, if they obey its rules, riches, and honours, and happiness, in this world. Its rewards are all future. *Thou shalt be rewarded*, says

our Lord—how, and when, rewarded?—rewarded with an uniform flow of tranquillity and peace, and domestic ease and happiness, in *this* world—rewarded with every thing that is vulgarly pronounced the summit of human felicity, long life, health, and prosperity? With none of these things in this world, as the recompense, reader, of thy obedience—the Christian crown was never designed to be worn in this world—*thou shalt be rewarded at the resurrection of the just.*—Oh! what a powerful argument is this glorious topic which the Christian religion reveals and enforces, to moderate the greatest sorrows we can be called to suffer in this world, and to calm and compose into tranquillity, and placid resignation to a good God, the most distressed and melancholy bosom! Our deceased children and parents, friends and relations, are not lost to God and to immortality. It was not our friend we committed to the grave—we only consigned some frail and perishing appendages of his nature—our *friend* could not die—for the immaterial and immortal part was properly our friend—was properly what we loved and delighted in, and hope one day to meet and embrace in an happier world. We Christians close our eyes upon this world—but we close them in hope. Only *that which is imperfect*, as the Apostle speaks, *is done away*. The soul perishes not at death—doth not suffer one common extinction with our ashes—it will live to God, to Jesus, and to happiness. The farewell we bid to life is not an eternal and everlasting adieu. We part with a temporary existence only to resume an eternal one. In this momentary state we are only in the infancy of our being, our knowledge, and our happiness. The scheme of divine Providence towards us rational and immortal creatures, is a vastly glo-

rious and immensely grand and extensive one. The date of this most magnificent period commences in this world, but it reaches through a boundless duration. It is but a small, a very inconsiderable point of this most glorious plan which we in this world behold—when millions and millions of centuries and ages shall have rolled away, we shall be better judges of the greatness and grandeur of this incomprehensibly glorious *scheme*, which the Divine Goodness, from eternal ages, contrived for the improvement and felicity of us his children. How indecent, then, how incongruous, how ungrateful is inconsolable grief and disconsolate sorrow, on a temporary loss, which we shall shortly regain with such infinite advantage!—regain! oh, how improved! oh, how ineffably blessed!—and instead of congratulating them and ourselves that they are most mercifully dismissed from this ensnaring world, before they were corrupted with its vices—instead of joyful gratulations that they have exchanged death for life, mortality for immortality, time for eternity, trouble and distress for peace and tranquillity, disease and pain for immortal health, and ease, and joy; instead of pronouncing them happy, almost envying their happiness, for having escaped the pollutions of this world, been strangers to its variety of misery and wretchedness; and, in the youth and morning of life, by a soft and no very great transition, been metamorphosed into angels and radiant blessed seraphs—instead of cheering and consoling our spirits with these delightful Christian views and prospects, to go mourning all our days; *to refuse to be comforted because they are not;* to carry about with us a bosom heaving with incessant sorrows, an heart and spirit overwhelmed in the bitterness of de-

spairing melancholy; night and day brooding over a dreary, dismal prospect; our eyes raining ceaseless streams of bitter briny tears; the sun a blank to us, music discord, innocent pleasure and cheerfulness madness and distraction; not so resigned to God as we ought to be, and thinking hardly of the divine dispensations to us. Not that our religion forbids a just and becoming expression of our sorrows. Our religion doth not lay an embargo on any of those tender sensibilities, of which our natures are formed susceptible. Neither our divine religion, nor the Author of it, either by precept or example, forbid our tears to flow, or our hearts to feel a pang on the loss and departure of the objects of our fond affections. To drop a tear over the ashes of our departed friends, is human, it is Christian. Jesus wept —shed a shower of affectionate tributary tears over the grave of his amiable departed friend Lazarus. A stoical apathy and insensibility is not a doctrine of the Christian religion. The Gospel was not intended to extirpate our passions, but to moderate them. It would be cruel to interdict the heart those soft effusions, which are the dictates of our nature, and which afford such relief and ease to a mind overwhelmed with grief. For deceased worth, for departed amiable virtue, it permits us to *sorrow*, provided we do not *sorrow as those who have no hope*. Inconsolable, hopeless sorrow it leaves to unenlightened heathens, who have not the principles and views of Christians—have not their delightful transporting prospects to sooth and assuage their sorrows. Those who had no other glimpse of futurity but what the light of nature gave them; those, whose prevailing notion it was, that death put an end to all our existence—that life, and be-

ing, and happiness, were all extinguished and vanished into air with our last breath—those, who had these cheerless uncomfortable views, as the heathens had, who had no hope of any thing better and farther than the grave, might, consistently with their principles, indulge the highest excesses of immoderate sorrow, and with disconsolate melancholy deplore the everlasting annihilation, and total, absolute, irrecoverable extinction of the dear objects of their parental, fraternal, or filial tenderness —now forever lost—to be seen and embraced no more —to be mingled with the common earth—reduced to their original principles—never more to be reassembled —sharing one common undistinguished destiny with the brute creation. Jews and Gentiles, who, in *their* religions, enjoyed no clear and express discoveries of a future state, might, on the death of amiable and beloved objects, as we find from their history they did, rend their clothes, put on sackcloth, throw ashes over their heads, tear their hair, beat their bosoms, refuse all proper sustenance for several days and nights, pierce the air with their cries and lamentations, use the most violent expressions of grief, and yield their hearts a prey to obstinate and sullen melancholy—they might commit these violences, who believed an utter annihilation at death; and, consequently, had every thing to fear from death: but such extravagances and excesses as these, are highly unbecoming the virtuous professors of the gospel, who have every thing to hope from death, and who are taught to believe, that death is nothing more than the means of introduction and admission to a new and nobler life. I cannot but observe the language which the scripture applies to the decease of our friends. It is truly beautiful

and consolatory. *I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them who are* ASLEEP: denoting, that the state of insensibility, into which they are fallen by death, is but a temporary *repose*, from which they will *wake* in the morning of the resurrection. Their being is not annihilated—they are not *lost** out of the creation—there is not a total and everlasting extinction of their existence—their vital and intellectual powers are only for a few unperceived moments suspended—their sensibilities, and faculties, and capacities are only laid dormant for a momentary point of time in the grave, that they may recover and reenjoy them with infinite advantage and improvement in the eternal world of light, perfection, and happiness. Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth*, says our Lord, speaking of his decease, but I go to *awake* him out of his sleep. The disciples thought, says the evangelist, that he meant the refreshing repose of sleep, and judged it a favourable prognostic of his recovery; *Lord if he sleepeth, he will do well; however, Jesus spake of his death*; and the phrase by which he expressed his death, is, upon the christian scheme, elegant, just, and instructive. The same beautiful expression of denoting death by *sleep*, the apostles used. *Even so them, also*, says St. Paul, *who* sleep in Jesus, will *God bring with him*. Awakening and awful are the words of our Lord upon this subject, and it behoves the living to pay them a devout and most serious attention: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth—come forth*, not to enter upon a state of trial and probation any more—that is irreco-

* 1 Cor. xv. 18.

verably past; but shall wake and come forth; those who have done good in this world, to everlasting life; those who have done evil, to everlasting destruction. O blessed day! when we shall meet our deceased parents, our virtuous children, and all the wise and good whom we have known and read of in books, and embrace and congratulate each other with tears of joy, if the blessed can weep, at being ushered into a life that will never know pain, and sorrow, and death; and now all beginning a duration, that will be commensurate with eternity, and last as long as God himself endures. We see, therefore, in the last place, the reason why, in the grief for friends deceased, in which the Thessalonian christians were involved, the apostle tells them, *that he would not have* them to be ignorant of the joyful prospects christianity opened before them, in order that, by the power and energy of these great and glorious truths, he might alleviate and assuage their sorrows, and prevent them from indulging grief and melancholy to an unjustifiable excess. The principles of the Gospel afford the best antidote to grief. It gives us such elevated views of the glory and blessedness of the eternal world, as make us look down upon this fugitive introductory system with a great and noble indifference. It exhibits to our mind the glorious realities of the invisible world in such a strong and striking light, as infinitely diminishes the value of all terrestrial enjoyments, and causes us to prize nothing in this frail and transitory life, as our chief good and ultimate felicity. I would not, therefore, have any christian, who reads these pages, to be ignorant of this one great and animating truth concerning the pious dead, abundantly sufficient to dissi-

pate, at least to alleviate, his sorrows: *that if we believe, as we profess to do, that Jesus died and rose again, even so them, also, who sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him,* and collect them into a happy, harmonious, and blessed society and assembly, to part no more, but to be mutually happy in each other through eternal ages. Hear, then, the consolatory words of Jesus, and may God dispose thee, reader, to receive all that comfort which his affectionate valediction was designed to impart! *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*

A SERMON,

BY THE LATE RIGHT REV. GEORGE BULL, D. D.

LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S, A. D. 1713.

ON THE MIDDLE STATE OF HAPPINESS OR MISERY.

That he might go to his own place.—*Acts*, i. 25.

THE soul of every man, presently after death, hath its proper place and state allotted by God, either of happiness or misery, according as the man hath been good or bad in his past life. For the text tells us, that the soul of Judas, immediately after his death, had not only a place to be in, but also *his own proper place;* a place fit for so horrid a betrayer of his most gracious Lord and Master. And it was the wisdom of the apostolic writers to express the different place and state of good and bad men presently after death, by this and the like phrases, that they went to their *own proper*, *due*, or *appointed places;* that is, to places agreeable to their respective qualities, the good to a place of happiness, the wicked to a place and state of misery. If there were one common receptacle for all departed souls, good and bad (as some have imagined), Judas could not be said presently after death to *go to his own proper place*, nor Peter to his; but the same place would contain them both: but Judas hath his proper place, and Peter his. And here what avails the difference of place, unless we allow also a difference

of state and condition? If the joys of Paradise were in Hell, Hell would be Paradise; and if the torments of Hell were in Paradise, Paradise would be Hell: Judas, therefore, is in misery, and Peter in happiness. And what happiness or misery can be there, where there is no sense of either? If, presently after death, one common gulf of insensibility and oblivion swallowed up the souls of good and bad alike, the state of Judas and Peter would be the same. The result of all which is manifestly this, that the souls of men do not only subsist and remain after the death of their bodies, but also live and are sensible of pain or pleasure in that separate state; the wicked being tormented at present with a piercing remorse of conscience—that sleeping lion being now fully awakened—and expecting a far more dreadful vengeance yet to fall on them; and on the other side, the good being refreshed with the peace of a good conscience (now immutably settled), and with unspeakable comforts of God, and yet joyfully waiting for a greater happiness at the resurrection. And to prove this more fully will be my business at this time. Indeed there are some who grant that the soul of man is a distinct substance from his body, and doth subsist after the death thereof; but yet they dream, that the soul, in the state of separation, is, as it were, in a sleep, a lethargy, a state of insensibility, having no perception at all, either of joy or sorrow, happines or misery: an odd opinion, which seems altogether inconsistent with itself. For how can the soul subsist, and remain a soul, without sense and perception? For, as Tertullian somewhere truly saith, *Vita animæ est sensus—the life of the soul is perception;* wherefore to say an insensible

soul, seems a contradiction in terms. 'Tis true, whilst our souls are confined to these bodies, they can have no distinct perception of things, without the help of fancy and of those corporeal ideas, and, as it were, images of things impressed on them, which being seated in the body, must necessarily die and perish with it. But yet, even now, we find that the soul, being first helped by imagination, may at length arrive to a perception of some most certain conclusions, which are beyond the reach of imagination. We may understand more than we can imagine; that is, we may by reason certainly collect that there are some things really existing, of which we can frame no idea or phantasm in our imaginations. Thus I am most certain that there is a Being eternal, that hath no beginning of existence, though I can never be able to imagine a thing, without attributing some beginning of existence to it. We are sure that we ourselves exist, and many other beings; therefore there is an eternal Being, that had no beginning of existence, and by which all other beings that are not eternal do exist; and after the same manner we can demonstrate divers other propositions which are beyond the comprehension of our imagination. We have, therefore, a faculty or power within us superior to imagination; and of this we affirm, that it shall still remain, act, and operate, even when this grosser imagination of ours ceaseth, and is extinguished. If it be inquired in what way the soul perceives, when out of the body, whether by the help of some new subtiller organs and instruments fitted to its present state, which either by its own native power, given in its creation, it forms to itself, or by a special act of the divine power it is supplied with, or whether without them; I must answer with St. Paul, in

a like case (1 Cor. xii. 2), *I cannot tell; God knoweth.* And if any man shall laugh at this ingenuous confession of our ignorance, his laughter will but betray his own ignorance and folly; for, even now, we can scarce explain how we see or hear, how we think or understand, how we remember (least of all), though we have continual experience of all these operations in ourselves. And must it be thought strange that we cannot tell how our souls shall understand and operate, when out of our bodies, that being a state of which we never yet had any experience? Indeed, whilst our souls are wrapt in this flesh, we can no more imagine how they shall act when devested of it, than a child in the womb (even though we should suppose it to have the actual understanding of an adult person) can conceive what kind of life or world that is, into which it is afterwards to be born: or, to use another similitude, we can now no more conceive the manner of the soul's operation, when absent from the body, than a man born blind, that never saw the light, can understand a discourse of colours, or comprehend all the wonders and mysteries of the optic science. But the thing itself, that the soul in the state of separation hath a perception of things, and by that perception is either happy or miserable, is ascertained to us by divine revelation, of which we have all reasonable evidence, that it is indeed divine, and without the guidance of which, all our best philosophy in this matter is precarious and uncertain.

It was the assertion of the great lord Verulam, that all inquiries about the nature of the reasonable soul "must be bound over at last unto religion; there to be "determined and defined; for otherwise they still lie open

" to many errors and illusions of sense. For, seeing " that the substance of the soul was not deduced and " extracted in her creation from the mass of heaven and " earth, but immediately inspired from God; and seeing " the laws of heaven and earth are the proper subjects " of philosophy, how can the knowledge of the sub- " stance of the reasonable soul be derived or fetched " from philosophy? But it must be drawn from the " same inspiration from whence the substance thereof " first flowed."

Let us therefore hear what the divinely-inspired writers have taught us in this matter.

St. Paul had been caught up into the third Heaven, and also into Paradise, which the Scriptures tell us is the receptacle of the spirits of good men separated from their bodies, and therefore was best able to give us an account of the state of souls dwelling there. He assures us that those souls live and operate, and have a perception of excellent things. Nay, in the very same text where he speaks of that rapture of his, *viz.* 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3, 4, he plainly enough confirms this hypothesis. For, first, when he there declared himself uncertain whether he received those admirable visions he speaks of in or out of the body, he manifestly supposeth it possible for the soul, when out of the body, not only to subsist, but also to perceive and know, and even things beyond the natural apprehension of mortal men. And then, when he tells us that he received in Paradise visions and revelations, and heard there *unspeakable words, not lawful* (or rather, not possible), *for man to utter;* he directly teacheth, that Paradise is so far from being a place of darkness and obscurity, silence and oblivion, where the

good spirits, its proper inhabitants, are all in a profound sleep, like bats in their winter-quarters (as some have vainly imagined); that, on the contrary, it is a most glorious place, full of light and ravishing vision, a place where mysteries may be heard and learnt far surpassing the reach of frail mortals. Lastly, the glories of the third Heaven, and of Paradise too, seem to be, by an extraordinary revelation, opened and discovered to St. Paul, not only for his own support under the heavy pressure of his afflictions, but also that he might be able to speak of them with greater assurance to others. And the order is observable. First, he had represented to him the most perfect joys of the third or highest Heaven, of which we hope to be partakers after the resurrection; and then, lest so long an expectation should discourage us, he saw also the intermediate joys of *Paradise*, wherewith the souls of the faithful are refreshed, until the resurrection; and, for our comfort, he tells us, that even these also are inexpressible.

The same blessed apostle, when in the flesh, tells us, that he desired *to depart and to be with Jesus Christ, which is far better.* Phil. i. 23. Where, if any man shall doubt what is meant by the Greek word which we translate *to depart*, the phrase is clearly explained by the following opposition, ver. 24: Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. Whence it is plain, that *to depart*, is to depart from the flesh, that is, this mortal body,—that is, to die. Now how could the apostle think it better for him—yea, by *far better*—to depart from the body, than to remain in it, if, when he should depart from the body, he should be deprived of all sense, and sink into a lethargy and utter oblivion

of things? Is it not better to have the use of our reasoning faculty, than to be deprived of it? Is it not better to praise God in the land of the living, than to be in a state wherein we can have no knowledge of God at all, nor be in a capacity of praising him? Besides, the apostle doth not desire to depart from the flesh, or to die, merely that he might be at rest and freed from the labours and persecutions attending his apostolic office; which is the frigid and dull gloss of some interpreters on the text, but chiefly in order to this end, that he might *be with Christ*. Now, certainly, we are more with Christ whilst we abide in the flesh, than when we depart from it, if, when we are departed, we have no sense at all of Christ or of any thing else.

Let us hear the same apostle again (2 Cor. v. 6, 7, 8): *Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home* (or rather, conversant) *in the body, we are absent from the Lord; for we walk by faith, not by sight: we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present* (or conversant) *with the Lord.* Where two things are, in the first place, to be observed: 1. That the apostle doth here, undeniably, speak of that state of the faithful which presently commenceth after death, and not of that only, which follows the resurrection. For he expressly speaks of them as in the state of separation, when they are *absent from the body.* 2. That the apostle, speaking to the faithful of Corinth in general, joins them together with himself, speaking all along in the plural number, *we are confident*, &c.; and hereby signifies, that he speaks not of a privilege peculiar to himself, and some few other eminent saints like himself; but of

the common state and condition of the faithful presently after death. Which two things being premised, the text alleged, plainly teacheth us this proposition: "That the faithful, when they are absent from their bodies (that is, departed this life), are present with the Lord, and that in a sense wherein, whilst they were present in their bodies, they were absent from the Lord."

And what sense, I pray, can that be, unless this, that, when present in their bodies, they did not so nearly enjoy Christ as now, when absent from their bodies, they do? No sophistry can possibly reconcile this text with their opinion, who affirm, that the souls of the faithful, during the interval between death and the resurrection, are in a profound sleep, and void of all sense and perception. But let us hear the Lord Jesus himself, who came down from Heaven, and therefore knew most certainly the whole economy of the heavenly regions; and who, upon the account of his omniscient and omnipresent Deity, as perfectly knew the miserable state of those spirits who dwell in the opposite regions of darkness. He, when he was dying, made this promise to the repenting thief that was crucified with him. *To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* Luke, xxiii. 43. Where, as learned interpreters have observed, Christ promiseth more than he had been asked. The penitent thief's request was, *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom!* To which our Saviour answers, Thou askest me to remember thee hereafter, when I come into my kingdom; but I will not put off thy request so long, but on this very day I will give thee a part, and the first fruits of that hoped-for felicity; die securely; presently after death, divine comforts await thee.

To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.—Paradise! what place is that? Surely every man that hath heard of it, conceives it to be a place of pleasure. And hence it is proverbial among us to express every pleasant and delightful place, by calling it a *Paradise.* Into this place our Saviour promiseth the thief an admission *on the very day* that he died and was crucified with him. Now to what purpose was it told him, that he should on *that day* be an inhabitant of Paradise, unless then he should be capable of the joys and felicities of that delightful place? Paradise would be no Paradise to him that should have no sense or faculty to taste and perceive the delights and pleasures of it. But that we may not discourse uncertainly, let us consider that the person to whom our Saviour spoke these words was a Jew, and that our blessed Lord, speaking in kindness to him, intended to be understood by him. We are, therefore, to inquire, what the notion of the ancient Jews was concerning Paradise, and the persons inhabiting there. Paradise among the Jews primarily signified *the Garden of Eden,* that blessed garden, wherein Adam, in his state of innocence, dwelt. By which, because it was a most pleasant and delightful place, they were wont symbolically to represent the place and state of good souls separated from their bodies, and waiting for the resurrection; whom they believed to be in a state of happiness far exceeding all the felicities of this life, but yet inferior to that consummate bliss which follows the resurrection. For they distinguished Paradise from the third Heaven, as St. Paul, also being bred up in the Jewish literature, seems to do in the above-cited text (2 Cor. xii.), where he speaks of several visions and revelations that he had received, one in the third Heaven,

another in Paradise. Hence it was the solemn good wish of the Jews (as the learned tell us from the Talmudists) concerning their dead friend, *Let his soul be in the garden of Eden*, or, *Let his soul be gathered into the garden of Eden;* and in their prayers for a dying person, they used to say, *Let him have his portion in Paradise, and also in the world to come.* In which form, *Paradise* and *the world to come* are plainly distinguished. According to which notion, the meaning of our Saviour in this promise to the penitent thief, is evidently this: that he should, presently after his death, enter with him into that state of bliss and happiness, where the souls of the righteous, separated from their bodies, inhabit, and where they wait in a joyful expectation of the resurrection, and the consummation of their bliss in the highest heaven; for that our Saviour did not here promise the thief an immediate entrance into that Heaven, the ancients gathered from hence, that he himself, as man, did not ascend thither till after his resurrection, as our very creed informs us, which is also St. Austin's argument in his fifty-seventh Epistle. The texts of Scripture hitherto alleged, speak indeed only of the souls of good men: but by the rule of contraries, we may gather that the souls of the wicked, also, in the state of separation, are sensible of great anguish and torment at present, and being in expectation of a far greater torment yet to come. Let us hear our Saviour again plainly describing both states of separated souls in the parable of the Rich Man, and Lazarus the beggar, Luke, xvi. 22, 23, 24, 25: *And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buri-*

ed. And in Hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

Here Lazarus is expressly said, presently after his death, to be in Abraham's bosom, and comforted there; and the rich man, immediately after his death, to be tormented in (*Hades*) Hell.

'Tis true this is a parable, and accordingly several things in it are parabolically expressed: but though every thing in a parable be not argumentative, yet the scope of it is, as all divines acknowledge. Now it plainly belongs to the very scope and design of this parable, to show what becomes of the souls of good and bad men after death. And we have already heard, from our Saviour's own mouth, that one part of the parable concerning the comfortable state of good souls in Abraham's bosom, or Paradise, immediately after death, is true and real; and therefore so is the other concerning the souls of the wicked. Add hereunto, that our Saviour spake this parable also to the Jews; and that therefore the parable must be expounded agreeably to the ancient *cabala*, or tradition received among them concerning the state of separate souls.* Now whereas our Saviour saith of the soul of

* The Jews had three modes of expressing the happiness of good men after death—They go "to the Garden of Eden"—"to the throne of God"—or, as here adopted by our Saviour, "to

Lazarus, that immediately after his death it was conveyed by angels into Abraham's bosom; we find it was also the belief of the Jewish church, before our Saviour's time, that the souls of the faithful, when they die, are, by the ministry of angels, conducted to Paradise, where they are immediately placed in a blissful and happy state. For the *Chaldee* Paraphrast on Cant. iv. 12, speaking of the Garden of Eden (that is, Paradise), saith that thereinto *no man hath power of entering but the just, whose souls are carried thither by the hands of angels.* If this had been an erroneous opinion of the Jews, doubtless our Saviour would never have given any the least countenance to it, much less would he have plainly confirmed it by teaching the same thing in this parable. These testimonies of Holy Writ—to omit divers others—clearly enough prove what we have alleged them for. But for our farther confirmation, and to leave no ground of suspicion, that we have misunderstood and misapplied them, let us in the next place consider what the approved doctors of the church, that were the disciples and scholars of the divinely inspired Apostles, and the nearer successors of *these*, have delivered concerning this matter. Now I do affirm the consentient and constant doctrine of the primitive church to be this, that the souls of the faithful, immediately after death, enter into a place and state of bliss, far exceeding all the felicities of *this* world, though short of that most consummate perfect beatitude of the kingdom of heaven, with which they are to be crowned

the bosom of Abraham." This last signifying in general, admitted to the fellowship of that eminent patriarch, and to a participation of his glory and felicity with "the spirits of the just made perfect." E

and rewarded in the resurrection; and so, on the contrary, that the souls of all the wicked are, presently after death, in a state of very great misery; and yet dreading a far greater misery at the day of judgment. Now to proceed: from what hath been said, it appears that the doctrine of the distinction of the joys of Paradise, the portion of good souls in their state of separation, from that yet fuller and most complete beatitude of the kingdom of heaven after the resurrection, consisting in that clearest vision of God, which the Holy Scriptures call seeing him *face to face*, is far from being Popery, as some have ignorantly censured it; for we see it was the current doctrine of the first and purest ages of the church. I add, that, so far from being Popery, it is the direct contrary; for it was the Popish convention at Florence that first boldly defined, against the sense of the primitive Christians, *That those souls, which having contracted the blemish of sin, are either in their bodies or out of them purged from it, do presently go into Heaven, and there clearly behold God himself, one God in three persons, as he is.*

And this decree they made partly to establish their superstition of praying to the saints deceased, whom they would needs make us to believe, see and know all our necessities and concerns, *in speculo Trinitatis, in the glass of the Trinity*, as they call it, and so to be fit objects of our religious invention; but chiefly to introduce their purgatory, and that the prayers of the ancient church for the dead might be thought to be founded on a supposition that the souls of some faithful persons after death go into a place of grievous torment, out of which they may be delivered by the prayers of the church, al-

ways provided there be a sum of money left by themselves, or supplied by their friends for them; a gross imposition, that hath been, I am persuaded, the eternal ruin of thousands of souls, for whom our blessed Lord shed his most precious blood, who might have escaped Hell if they had not trusted to a Purgatory. The sum of all is this: all good men, without exception, are in the whole interval between their death and resurrection, as to their souls, in a very happy state: but after the resurrection they shall be yet more happy, receiving then their full reward and perfect consummation of bliss, both in soul and body, the most perfect bliss they are capable of, according to the divers degrees of virtue, through the grace of God on their endeavours, attained by them in this life. On the other side, all the wicked, as soon as they die, are very miserable as to their souls; and shall be yet far more miserable, both in soul and body, after the day of judgment, proportionally to the measure of sins committed by them here on earth.

This is the plain doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, and of the church of Christ in its first and best ages, and this we may trust to. Other inquiries there are of more certainty than use, and we ought not to trouble and perplex ourselves about them.

I shall now conclude with a brief and serious application. First: this discourse *is matter of abundant consolation to all good men when death approacheth them.* They are sure not only of a blessed resurrection at the last day, but of a reception into a very happy place and state in the mean time. They shall be, immediately after death, put in the possession of Paradise, and there rejoice in the certain expectation of a crown of glory, to

be bestowed on them at the day of recompense. Fear not, good man! when death comes; for, the good angels are ready to receive thy soul, and convey it into Abraham's bosom—a place, wherever it is, of rest; and that not a stupid, insensible rest, but a rest attended with a lively perception of a far greater joy and delight than this whole world can afford; a place of the best society and company, where thou shalt be gathered to the spirits of just men, to the holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and confessors, and familiarly converse with those saints and excellent persons whom thou hast heard of, and admired, and whose examples thou hast endeavoured to imitate; a place that is the rendezvous of the holy angels of God, and which the Son of God himself visits and illustrates with the rays of his glory; a place where there shall be no wicked men to corrupt or offend thee, no devil to tempt thee, no sinful flesh to betray thee; a place full of security, where thou shalt be out of all possible danger of being undone and miserable forever; a place from which all sorrow (because all sin) is banished; where there is nothing but joy, and yet more joy still expected: this is the place that death calls thee to. Why, therefore, shouldst thou be afraid of dying? yea, rather, why shouldst thou not, when death calls thee to it, willingly and cheerfully die, desiring *to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better?* If thou wert to fall into a lethargic state when thou diest, and have no perception of comfort till the last day, if darkness were then to overshadow thee till the light of Christ's glorious appearance at the resurrection came upon thee, this might reasonably make thee unwilling to die, and desirous to continue longer here, where there

is some comfort, some enjoyment of Christ, though imperfect. If such a purgatory as the supposition of the Roman church hath painted out to the vulgar, were to receive thee, well mightest thou be not only unwilling, but also horribly afraid, to die.

But, God be thanked, Christ and his apostles, and the disciples of the apostles, have taught us much better things: *wherefore let us comfort one another with these words.* 1 Thess. iv. 18.

Secondly: This discourse *deserves seriously to be considered by all wicked men.* If they die such, (and who knows how soon he may die?) they are immediately consigned to a place and state of irreversible misery; they have trod in the steps of Judas in this life, and shall presently after death go to the same dismal place where Judas is; a place where there is no company but the devil and his angels, and those lost souls that have been seduced by them; a place of horrid darkness, where there shines not the least glimmering of light or comfort; a place of wretched spirits that are continually vexed at the sad remembrance of their former sins and follies, and feel the wrath of God for them, and tremble at the apprehension of a greater wrath yet to come; who presently taste the cup of divine vengeance, and are heart sick to think of the time when they must drink up the pale dregs of it. This, O sinner! is the miserable place and state whereinto thou shalt immediately enter when thou diest, if thou diest, as thou now art. Do not deceive thyself with the thoughts of a reprieve till the day of judgment, or think thou shalt be in an insensible state till then, and not tormented before that time; for immediately after death thy state of misery shall commence. Do not entertain

thyself with the desperate hopes of a purgatory, or the advantage of a broken plank to save thee after the shipwreck of death. In the same miserable state thou diest, thou shalt continue to the day of judgment, and then thy misery shall be consummated. *Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.* Psal. l. 22. To sum up all, let us pray and labour that we may never, never, be gathered, or come into *the place of Judas*, the place and state of reprobate and forever lost spirits: *from this, good Lord deliver us!* that when we die we may go to the Region of the Godly, to Paradise, to Abraham's bosom, and at the Resurrection may sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of Heaven.

And in order thereunto, let us here thoroughly purge *ourselves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* 2 Cor. vii. 1. For there is no purgation to be expected in the other life; yea, let us endeavour to excel in virtue here, that so we may have a more abundant entrance both into the joys of Paradise, and also into the fuller glories of the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

EXTRACT FROM A DISCOURSE,

BY GEORGE HORNE, D. D.

LATE BISHOP OF NORWICH, AND PRESIDENT OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

RACHEL COMFORTED.

Thus saith the Lord, A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping: Rachel, weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border.—*Jer.* xxxi. 15, 16, 17.

THESE words, suggest to us some useful reflections, suitable to the festival, on the case of the slaughtered *infants*, and that of the lamenting *mothers*. With regard to the *infants*, we may observe the choice, made by the church, of proper persons to attend the blessed Jesus, upon the commemoration of his birth. These are, St. Stephen, St. John, and the Innocents. He was born to suffer; and, therefore, the festival of his nativity is immediately followed by the festivals of those who suffered for him. St. Stephen was a martyr, and the first martyr, both in will and deed: St. John, the beloved disciple, was such in will, but not in deed, being miraculously preserved from the death intended for him by Domitian. The Innocents were martyrs in deed, but not in will, by reason of their tender age.

Of these last, however, it pleased the Prince of martyrs to have his train composed, when he made his entry into the world; as, at this season, a train of infants, suited to an infant Saviour; a train of innocents, meet to follow the spotless Lamb, who came to convince the world of sin, and to redeem it in righteousness. They were the first-fruits offered to the Son of God, after his incarnation, and their blood the first that flowed on his account. They appeared as so many champions in the field, clad in the King's coat of armour, to intercept the blows directed against him.

The Christian poet, Prudentius, in one of his hymns, has an elegant and beautiful address to these young sufferers for their Redeemer:

Salvete, flores martyrum,
Quos, lucis ipso in limine,
Christi insecutor sustulit,
Ceu turbo nascentes rosas.
Vos, prima Christi victima,
Grex immolaturum tener,
Aram ante ipsam, simplices,
Palmâ et coronis luditis.

"Hail! ye first flowers of the evangelical spring, cut off by the sword of persecution, ere yet you had unfolded your leaves to the morning, as the early rose droops before the withering blast. Driven, like a flock of lambs to the slaughter, you have the honour to compose the first sacrifice offered at the altar of Christ; before which methinks I see your innocent simplicity sporting with the palms and the crowns held out to you from above."

So remarkable an event necessarily attracts our attention to that age, which is proposed by our Lord, as,

in many respects, a model for us all to copy, in forming our tempers and dispositions: "They brought young children to Christ, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But Jesus was much displeased, and said, Suffer little children to come to me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." And again, when the disciples "asked him, who should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, he took a little child, and set him in the midst, and said, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of God." To be fit for the inheritance of the saints in light, we must put off the passions which are too apt to infest us as *men*—ambition, pride, revenge, covetousness, and concupiscence of every sort; and put on their opposites—humility, meekness, modesty, charity, purity, simplicity: we must become such in heart and mind, by the discipline of religion, as little children are, by their age; possessed of the same unlimited confidence in the care of a Father, who, as we are assured, careth for us; looking up to him for all we want, and flying to him for protection from all we fear; never entertaining a suspicion of our being forsaken or neglected by him, nor the least inclination to resist his will; equally insensible to the promises and threatenings of the world; resigned to suffer, and not afraid to die, when we are called so to do; able to smile at the drawn dagger, and ready to embrace the arm that aims it at our heart.

This idea of a child of God was daily realised, to the admiration of the whole Pagan world, in the first ages of the church. The same inexhaustible and all-

powerful grace will realize it in these latter days, when religion shall be considered by us as an art rather than as a science; when *non magna loquimur sed vivimus*, shall be the device adopted by the Christian philosopher; and the precepts of the Gospel shall be practised with as much diligence as that with which its evidences are studied.

And, lo! for our encouragement, in the portion of scripture this day appointed for the epistle, the veil is rent which separates the two worlds; the prospect is opened into another system; the "holiest of all" is disclosed; the celestial mount is discovered; and on its summit "we see a lamb stand, with an hundred and forty-four thousand" of the like sweet and innocent disposition, "having his father's name written on their foreheads. These are they which follow the lamb, whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb; and in their mouth was found no guile, for they were without fault before the throne of God." From their station they beckon us after them, showing us, for our instruction and direction in the way, that "of such is the kingdom of heaven."

And now we are ready, perhaps, to say with St. Peter, on an occasion somewhat similar, It is good for us to be here! Let us make our abode on the mount! But the time is not yet. We must return, and conclude, as we began, with the lamenting *mothers*, whom we left behind us in the valley of tears. Their cries, like those of Rachel, portending the birth of a *Benoni*, a *son of sorrow*, teach us, his disciples, to expect sorrow for our portion in this life, and to look forward to another,

for comfort and joy. In the world, as in Rama, "a voice is heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning." Earthly possessions, and satisfactions of every sort, are, by their nature, transient. They *may* leave us; we *must* leave them. To him who views them, in their most settled state, with the eye of wisdom, they appear, as the air in the calmest day does to the philosopher through his telescope, ever undulating and fluctuating. If we place our happiness in them, we build upon the wave. It rolls from under us, and we sink into the depths of grief and despondency.

Children, relations, friends, honours, houses, lands, revenues, and endowments, the goods of nature and of fortune, nay even of grace itself, are only *lent*. It is our misfortune to fancy they are *given*. We start, therefore, and are angry, when the loan is called in. We think ourselves *masters*, when we are but *stewards;* and forget, that to each of us will it one day be said, "Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou must be no longer steward."

Youth dreams of joys unremitted, and pleasures uninterrupted; and sees not, in the charming perspective, the cross accidents that lie in wait, to prevent their being so. But should no such accidents for a while intervene, to disturb the pleasing vision, age will certainly awake, and find it at an end. The scythe of time will be as effectual, though not so expeditious, as the sword of the persecutor; and without a Herod, Rachel, if she live long, will be heard lamenting; she will experience sorrows, in which the world can administer no adequate comfort. She must, therefore, look beyond it.

The patriarchs and people of God, in old time, were often delivered from adversity. They often enjoyed prosperity: but after all the wonders wrought for them, and all the blessings conferred upon them, the issue of things was still the same. These friends and favourites of Heaven still saw their relations, frequently their children, falling around them, and at length dropped, themselves, into the grave, to be mourned over by those that survived them. This was the case even in the land of Promise itself. Deplorable indeed, therefore, and desperate, like the worst of the brethren, would have been their condition, had they not been taught, through temporal deliverances and temporal prosperity, in a temporal land of Promise, to contemplate another deliverance from the power of the destroyer, another prosperity that should have no end, in another land of Promise, which should never be taken from them, and from which they should never be taken; where they, their parents, and their children, should meet again, to part no more. What else is "the hope of Israel," what else can it be, but a "resurrection from the dead*?"

Nothing can be plainer than the words of the apostle on this subject. Having enumerated the ancient worthies, from Abel to David, and the succeeding Prophets, he thus concludes: "These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise†:" THE promise, emphatically, the grand promise, in faith of which they died, and of which all other promises were only shadows, and known by them to be such; "God having" all along foreseen and "provided some better thing for us;" better than any of those

* Acts, xxiv. 15; xxvi. 6; xxvii. 20.
† Την επαγγελιαν.

figurative promises which they did receive; to wit, an eternal redemption, and an eternal inheritance; that, in such eternal redemption and inheritance, "they, without us, should not be made perfect*," as God intends that we, together with them, at the general resurrection, shall be made perfect in Heaven.

If, then, the mothers in Judah and Benjamin had been properly instructed in the faith of the ancient church, when Jeremiah addressed to them the words we have been considering, though they must understand them immediately as a promise that their children should be delivered from Babylon, and brought back again to their own land; yet their thoughts would naturally be carried on, for further comfort, to that other deliverance and restoration from death, promised by all the holy Prophets, since the world began; even as we may presume the thoughts of a Christian parent would now be, whose son was a slave in Barbary, should a Prophet be sent to him with the following message from God: "Your son is gone into captivity, but he shall certainly be redeemed from it."

This, however, is indisputable; that in the application which St. Matthew has taught us to make of the passage, it can admit of no other construction; because there can be no deliverance from bodily death, but by a bodily resurrection.

Learn we, therefore—and a more important and useful lesson cannot be learned—whenever death deprives us of those who are near and dear to us, to comfort ourselves and one another with these words; and let each of us, as occasion for consolation shall offer itself,

* Heb. xi. 40.

listen to Jeremiah's prophecy, as if it were spoken to himself; " Thus saith the Lord; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children," thy relations, or thy friends, " shall come again to their own border;" that from the dark and desolate regions of the grave, they shall come to the light and glory of the heavenly Jerusalem, where, as holy John tells us, " there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying*;" where Rachel shall finally cease her lamentations, lay aside her mourning veil, and wipe away all tears for ever from her eyes.

* Rev. xxi. 4.

EXTRACT FROM A SERMON,

BY GEORGE HILL, D. D. F. R. S. EDINBURGH.

PRINCIPAL OF ST. MARY'S COLLEGE, IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREW, ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF THAT CITY, AND ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S CHAPLAINS IN ORDINARY FOR SCOTLAND.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.—*Rev.* vii. 17.

If the incidental hints which are given in Scripture encourage us to entertain a hope, of which it is not easy to devest ourselves, that the glorified saints shall recognise, hereafter, those with whom they had travelled through the pilgrimage of life; if we think ourselves warranted to give the most delightful interpretation to the words in my text, by supposing that those private affections which had been formed and nourished by the habits of human life, and which, after having constituted one of the chief joys of a present state, had been interrupted by the rude hand of death, are to revive in the presence of the God of Love, purified from every thing corporeal, without alloy and without fear; it may seem to follow, that in the happiness of Heaven, as in all earthly good, there is a mixture of pleasure and pain; for while all the friends who had edified and comforted each other, meet to part no more, while the flower which we had watered, and which had blossomed under our hand, lifts its head in a kindlier climate, and we are delighted with

its fragrance, some of those whom we once loved and cherished are cast forth and withered. But think not that this separation, the most melancholy thought which at present obtrudes itself upon a benevolent mind, will spread any cloud over the mansions of everlasting day; the righteousness and wisdom of the Divine government shall then be so completely understood, that not only every murmuring will cease, but not a wish will remain that it had been conducted in a different manner; the native deformity of sin shall then be so conspicuous, that those who are without shall no longer continue objects of affection to those who are within. They who are admitted to dwell with God, satisfied with the refined employment which all the powers of their nature will receive in His presence, delighted with the society of the spirits of the just made perfect, and feeling no vacancy in their desires or affections, will ascribe blessing and honour to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb who redeemed them to God by his blood; and acknowledging that the ways of the King of Saints are just and true, they will rest in the assurance of his everlasting love.

That view of the happiness of Heaven which we have endeavoured to illustrate, naturally leads our thoughts to the following reflections:

I. If all tears are to be wiped away hereafter, it follows, that religion does not profess to wipe them away here.

Man is born to trouble; the sorrows which chequer his lot are inseparable from the condition of his being; they sometimes spring from the very sources of his joy; they are often the medicine of his soul; for the tears

shed by a feeble fallible creature, have a healing power, and by the sadness of his countenance his heart is made better.

Let this view of our present condition correct those vain expectations and those romantic notions of human life, which are inspired by natural vivacity, by the flattering prospects of youth, or by the uninterrupted success of riper years. When you rejoice, be careful to maintain that sobriety of mind which is the first lesson of wisdom, and principal ingredient of true happiness; and when you cannot refrain from weeping, let not the voice of murmuring be heard amidst your lamentations. When in the sweetest bud you meet with some canker, when some want or weariness attends the treasure which appeared to you to be complete, when, after all your care in guarding every avenue, sorrow still finds access to your heart, be not prompt to throw the blame of your disappointment upon the defects of others, for the error lies with yourselves; disparage not the goodness of Providence, for you have only mistaken the order of its appointments; consider things as they are, and learn from your tears that this is not the rest of man.

II. If we believe that the time is coming when our tears shall be wiped away, let us prize the Gospel of Christ, which hath given us this blessed hope.

That succession of disappointments of which man has experience in all his present pursuits, endears to him those prospects of future good which it is the privilege of his nature to entertain; and in every land, in every state of society, he has endeavoured to sooth his mind, and to rise above his sorrows, by looking beyond the grave to a distant unknown country. But reason, with

all the evidence upon which she presumes that man is to exist after death, is unable to ascertain the circumstances in which he shall then be placed, or to give any assurance that his nature and condition are to undergo so complete a change, as to render him free from sorrow, and quiet from the fear of evil. It is revelation only which unfolds this untried state of our being. That God, who formed the spirit of man, and whose dominion extends throughout the universe, he alone is able to wipe away all tears from the eyes of his creatures, by removing from them every occasion of anguish, by satisfying every desire which he implanted, and by giving them a portion in which there is no defect. This is the promise which he hath promised us in the Gospel, the goodness which he hath laid up for them that fear him; a reward measured, not by the imperfection of our services, but by the riches of his grace, and secured by the mediation of his Son. *It is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness; for his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*

III. This description of the happiness of Heaven, like every other which the Scriptures contain, reminds us of the necessity of virtuous life.

There are persons from whose eyes the tears shall never be wiped. There is a continued and wilful transgression of the divine law, which multiplies the sorrows of life, which poisons every enjoyment, and which, after the days of trouble and self-reproach upon earth, come to an end, consigns men to that place where there

is weeping and gnashing of teeth; where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched. But *there remaineth a rest for the people of God. What are these which are arrived in white dresses? said one of the elders: and whence came they? These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore are they before the throne of God.*

This description of the persons from whose eyes God shall wipe away all tears, gives no countenance to an opinion which has often appeared under different forms, that tribulation is to be courted as the certain road to Heaven; for, while all the children of God, whether they court it or not, shall receive that measure of correction which their character appears to their Heavenly Father to require; many of those to whom waters of a full cup are wrung out, in their adversity sin yet more against the Lord. But if, by a patient continuance in well doing, by the zealous discharge of every duty, and by a cheerful resignation, under that portion of suffering which the Supreme Disposer of all events calls you to bear, ye are solicitous to escape the corruption that is in the world, and to testify your gratitude to that Saviour whose love you remember with delight, and through whose merit you look for acceptance, the blessed hope will grow out of your trials: you will feel its power reviving your souls in the midst of trouble: when you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, you will fear no evil: *ye shall at length come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon your heads, ye shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

A little before he died, Jesus said to his friends (and if ye do whatsoever he commands you, ye are of that number): *In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but, be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*

EXTRACT FROM A SERMON,

BY HUGH BLAIR, D. D. F. R. S. EDINBURGH.

ON THE HAPPINESS OF A FUTURE STATE.

After this I beheld, and, lo! a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.—*Revelation*, vii. 9.

What the words of the text most obviously suggest is, that Heaven is to be considered as a state of blessed society. *A multitude*, a numerous assembly, are here represented as sharing together the same felicity and honour. Without society, it is impossible for man to be happy. Place him in a region where he was surrounded with every pleasure; yet there, if he found himself a solitary individual, he would pine and languish. They are not merely our wants, and our mutual dependence, but our native instincts also, which impel us to associate together. The intercourse which we here maintain with our fellows, is a source of our chief enjoyments. But, alas! how much are these allayed by a variety of disagreeable circumstances that enter into all our connections. Sometimes we suffer from the distresses of those whom we love; and sometimes from their vices or frailties. Where friendship is cordial, it is exposed to the wounds of painful sympathy, and to the anguish of violent separation. Where it is so cool as not to occasion sympathetic pains, it is never productive of much

pleasure. The ordinary commerce of the world consists in a circulation of frivolous intercourse, in which the heart has no concern. It is generally insipid, and often soured by the slightest difference in humour, or opposition of interest. We fly to company, in order to be relieved fom wearisome correspondence with ourselves; and the vexations which we meet with in society drive us back again into solitude. Even among the virtuous, dissentions arise; and disagreement in opinion too often produces alienation of heart. We form few connexions where somewhat does not occur to disappoint our hopes. The beginnings are often pleasing. We flatter ourselves with having found those who will never give us any disgust. But weaknesses are too soon discovered. Suspicions arise, and love waxes cold. We are jealous of one another, and accustomed to live in disguise; a studied civility assumes the name without the pleasure of friendship; and secret animosity and envy are often concealed under the caresses of dissembled affection.

Hence the pleasure of earthly society, like all our other pleasures, is extremely imperfect; and can give us a very faint conception of the joy that must arise from the society of perfect spirits in a happier world. Here it is with difficulty that we can select from the corrupted crowd a few with whom we wish to associate in strict union. There are assembled all the wise, the holy, and the just, who ever existed in the universe of God; without any distress to trouble their mutual bliss, or any source of disagreement to interrupt their perpetual harmony. Artifice and concealment are unknown there. There, no competitors struggle, no factions contend; no

rivals supplant each other. The voice of discord never rises, the whisper of suspicion never circulates, among those innocent and benevolent spirits. Each, happy in himself, participates in the happiness of all the rest; and by reciprocal communications of love and friendship, at once receives from, and adds to, the sum of general felicity. Renew the memory of the most affectionate friends with whom you were blest in any period of your life, devest them of all those infirmities which adhere to the human character. Recall the most pleasing and tender moments which you ever enjoyed in their society; and the remembrance of those sensations may assist you in conceiving that felicity which is possessed by the saints above. The happiness of *brethren dwelling together in unity*, is, with great justice and beauty, compared by the Psalmist, to such things as are most refreshing to the heart of man, to the fragrancy of the richest odours, and to the reviving influence of soft ethereal dews. *It is like the precious ointment poured on the head of Aaron; and like the dew of Hermon, even the dew that descendeth on the mountains of Zion, where the Lord commandeth the blessing, even life for evermore.*

Besides the felicity which springs from perfect love, there are, too, circumstances which particularly enhance the blessedness of that *multitude who stand before the throne;* these are, access to the most exalted society, and renewal of the most tender connections. The former is pointed out in the scripture by *joining the innumerable company of angels, and the general assembly and church of the first-born; by sitting down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven;* a promise which opens the sublimest prospects to the human

mind. It allows good men to entertain the hope, that separated from all the dregs of the human mass, from that mixed and polluted crowd in the midst of which they now dwell, they shall be permitted to mingle with prophets, patriarchs, and apostles, with legislators and heroes, with all those great and illustrious spirits, who have shone in former ages as the servants of God, or the benefactors of men; whose deeds we are accustomed to celebrate, whose steps we now follow at a distance, and whose names we pronounce with veneration.

United to this high assembly, the blessed at the same time renew those ancient connexions with virtuous friends which had been dissolved by death. The prospect of this awakens in the heart the most pleasing and tender sentiment which perhaps can fill it, in this mortal state. For of all the sorrows which we are here doomed to endure, none is so bitter as that occasioned by the fatal stroke which separates us, in appearance, forever, from those to whom either nature or friendship had intimately joined our hearts. Memory, from time to time, renews the anguish; opens the wound which seemed once to have been closed; and, by recalling joys that are past and gone, touches every spring of painful sensibility. In these agonizing moments, how relieving the thought, that the separation is only temporary, not eternal; that there is a time to come, of reunion with those with whom our happiest days were spent; whose joys and sorrows once were ours; and from whom, after we shall have landed on the peaceful shore where they dwell, no evolutions of nature shall ever be able to part us more! Such is the society of the blessed above. Of such are the multitude composed who *stand before the throne.*

EXTRACT FROM A SERMON,

BY THE LATE REV. R. SHEPHERD, D. D.

ARCHDEACON OF BEDFORD.

I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.—2 *Sam.* xii. 23.

THE passage which is the subject of my present discourse, is capable of two very opposite interpretations. It may signify, "My son is gone everlastingly to mingle with the dust, which must be my fate too;" or, "My son is gone to another world; and there I again shall meet him." According to the first interpretation, the reflection is the language of despair; admitted in the latter sense, of consolation. The context will, beyond a doubt, evince which is the proper signification. And from thence it appears, that upon this consideration, "though his son should not return to him, he should go to his son;" he arose from the bed of affliction, *he washed and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped; then he came to his own house*, and administered consolation to his afflicted family.

The implication of the passage, therefore, is unquestionably consolatory; and the reflection is indeed matter of the greatest consolation that in such a case of affliction can be administered; it was the natural result too of a serious and devout mind, such as David possessed.

Those fond relations of parent, child, husband, brother, friend, are the sinews of society which tie men to each other by a compact, not dissolving as soon as the mutual wants of each other cease, but continuing to bind them closer and closer, as time lengthens the connexion. Hence the chain that often confines us to a spot, where, surrounded by those tender relatives, we prefer the struggle with care, poverty, and distress; rather than migrate to a distant soil, where perhaps those evils might be avoided, and every opposite good, honour, affluence, and ease, might be procured and enjoyed. Hence, too, the aggravated pangs of death, that rend the heart on leaving, when we are summoned hence, our near and dear relatives behind us. So formed by our Creator for society, that social appetite so interwoven with our nature, why should we suppose that we shall not carry about us, through every mode of existence, as long as we continue to exist? Without it we should not be human beings; and in the larger degree those relations extend, the larger share of happiness, other circumstances permitting, it is observable we generally possess; and on the contrary, to be unsocial, is, in synonimous terms, to be unhappy.* This principle, therefore, so characteristic of human nature, so congenial to the soul of man, so conducive to his happiness even in this life, reason instructs us to conclude will be continued to him in the next state of existence, and probably with increased satisfactions, and in a more extensive degree.

* On this idea is founded the punishment, lately introduced in this country for malefactors, of condemnation to separate cells.

And having such ground to believe that the social appetites we enjoy here, shall be indulged us in the next state of our existence, we find ourselves a great way advanced in our farther inquiry, who in that future state will be our associates. In this investigation, if we attend to the feelings which nature impresses, they instruct us, that to render us happy in the society to which we may be introduced, it must consist of beings possessing dispositions, inclinations, desires similar to our own. As, therefore, to the good the next state will be a state of happiness; the blessed inhabitants of the world to which they are called, we infer, shall be distinguished for their goodness too. It would be a heavy drawback from the happiness of the next world, if the pure of heart and votary of virtue should be consigned to the society of spirits stained and polluted by the practice of vice. Similitude of tempers and manners is a chief ingredient in the satisfactions of society, which we experience here: it is so essential to the happiness of a human being; that, shut up a strictly virtuous person in a house devoted to profligacy and riot; and, with the command of every thing conducive to the plenary enjoyment of happiness, amidst a profusion of gratifications, he would be miserable. Accordingly, as the happiness of the next life is assumed to be an increase of happiness, whatever derogates from it in this, it is reasonably inferred, will find no place there. In the next world, therefore, reason gives us assurance of finding a society good as ourselves, like ourselves, and qualified to conduce with us to mutual happiness.

Thus far reason goes in our information; let us next consult revelation on the point. Scripture informs us,

that the wicked shall go to a place of everlasting punishment, *prepared for the devil and his angels.* And there are some passages in Scripture which impliedly afford us the converse instruction; that the good shall be translated to those realms of bliss which the good angels inhabit. When our Lord says, in the next world, *they shall be as the angels of God;** if in the manners, and

* I will not, with the "cunning commentators" of Dr. Donne†, who slip over a passage because it is difficult, or may seem to contradict a favourite opinion, pass this text unnoticed. *In the resurrection* (saith our Lord) *they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God.*‡ And the declaration hath by some been thought to militate against the supposed knowledge of each other in a future state; which has no such direct, nor, as I conceive, even implied, signification. The words were addressed in answer to a question of the Sadducees, urged with an affected quaintness against the existence of a future state. And the plain and obvious signification of the passage is, that in the resurrection, that is, in a future state, the sensual pleasures will not attach to our renovated nature; that as there shall then be no more death, neither will marriage, instituted to supply the waste of mortality, be any longer necessary, and of course have place any longer. But to infer from thence, that all knowledge of each other shall be blotted out from memory, is neither a necessary conclusion, nor a just one. Before this can be made good, it must be proved that in the next state we shall lose all consciousness of what we were in this. And when that is evinced, another and more difficult question will present itself; which is, "What is the principle that shall constitute our identity?" If it be again replied, that *all* our consciousness will not be effaced, but only a part of it; it still remains to be resolved, where we shall draw the line between the portion of consciousness that will be retained, and that which will have no place

† *See Donne's Satires.* ‡ *Matthew*, xxiii. 30.

habits, and customs, men shall, in the succeeding state of existence, become like the angels so qualified for their society, fitted for it by a resemblance of them, why may they not cherish the hope that they shall be admitted into their fellowship and communion? When a sinner repents, the angels are represented as being so interested for his happiness, as to rejoice in his conversion. And how shall we better account for that joy, than by supposing that they thereby gain a companion, a friend, one associate more? *Father* (saith our Lord), *I will that they, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.** And where doth he reside, but in his kingdom; where legions of angels, as himself informs us, are at his command? If, therefore, he willed that his immediate disciples should be with him; all his faithful followers, we may conclude, will join the blessed assemblage —one fold under one Shepherd—happy in his presence, and united in community with each other. In words still clearer doth the apostle to the Hebrews express himself respecting their admission into the society of blessed spirits. *Ye are come* (says he) *to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly of the church of the first-born which are written in Heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.*† This declaration, in the so-

in memory. We must afford some reason for any part that we may suppose blotted out: and it would be difficult, I conceive, to assign a satisfactory one for the erasement of the knowledge, the innocent, the delightful knowledge of each other.

* John, xvii. 24. † Hebrews, xii. 22, 23.

ciety of angels, directly includes *the spirits of just men made perfect:* those who have perfected and finished their course; who have escaped all the dangers and temptations of the present world. With the above passage, though others might be cited to the same purport, I will conclude my citations from Scripture, enforcing the suggestions of reason; in proof that the society, with which the good shall in the next world be united, will consist of beings of dispositions virtuous, wise, and happy; angels and purified spirits of the just and good.

We have now gone a great way under the guidance of reason and revelation, in preparing for the question, which, on the loss of a near and dear friend, interested affection with earnestness and solicitude to its own heart addresses: "Shall we hereafter ever meet, and recognise each other again?" The hope of that is real consolation; it is among the first pleasures anticipation supplies: let us inquire, what ground we have to entertain it.

We have already assumed man a sociable being, with relations, not ceasing with the instinctive wants that produced them, but strengthening by continuance, and clinging closer and closer to the heart. When the child's wants of a parent's fostering hand no longer exist; filial and parental affection still continues, time not extinguishing, but increasing it. Husband and wife, when instinctive passion has subsided, feel an affection, more permanent than it, still tying their hearts with mutual fondness to each other. What shall we say of friendship; an affection founded not on want, or any sensual instinct? How does the mutual attachment of congenial minds increase by time and converse; each

feeling himself only half of the other, and only, when together, perfectly and completely one! Shall we suppose these near and dear connexions, increasing in strength as by time united, if this world be but the beginning of our existence, and there be another to succeed it, can we conceive these fond attachments, scarcely formed before they are dissolved, never again to be united?

This world, as the beginning of our existence, is the beginning of all our virtuous habits, of all our opening attachments: and if, growing and increasing as we proceed in life, they be by death suddenly and everlastingly dissolved; they might seem to be begun, only that we may be left disconsolate and afflicted for the loss of them. But why should they be dissolved? If there be a world to come, where the good and virtuous, *the just made perfect*, shall again exist; why shall it not be given them in that world to meet, and mutually recognise the near and dear objects of their former affection? But conjecture cannot take such ground; reasons not being wanting to support the opinion that it will, we must admit the truth of it.

We with reason believe that our capacity of knowledge shall in the next world be gloriously improved: and what reason is there to conjecture, that we shall lose a single ray of any beneficial knowledge which we now possess? No such loss can be included in a gradation towards perfection. When, therefore, the souls of good men hereafter meet and are made perfect, we must suppose they retain all their former knowledge, and likewise have a large portion of additional knowledge communicated to them. And that knowledge,

with the happiness attached to it, which we leave with most regret, expectation flatters us we shall again enjoy, in the renewal of our virtuous affections for kindred and congenial souls. It is the only kind of future knowledge, and of happiness from thence resulting, of which we can form any possible comprehension: and, therefore, indulged with the hopes of it, we trust those hopes will not deceive us.

Where shall we fix the extent of consciousness? If it be necessary to constitute identity, why should it not extend to circumstances in our former existence most interesting and affecting? Shall consciousness just so far serve us, as to suggest, we once existed; and, as to every particular in that existence, shall memory be blotted out? What is consciousness of past existence, but consciousness of deeds, good or bad, in that existence committed? And how shall we, or why should we, separate deeds from persons, implicated and involved as they are with one another?

Considering farther this world as a school of discipline, and the next as a state of retribution, our station in that other will, we must suppose, be respectively assigned according to our particular merits in this; and may not unreasonably conceive, that we shall consequently retain marks of distinction, and powers of discrimination; some individual characters of our former existence and condition. And so appointed, and so charactered, it is not likely that we should want either propensities to search for, or powers to discover, our friends and relations in a state of prior existence. All this is probable; and I contend no farther for the general theory, than as it contributes to place in a view con-

ciliatory of rational assent the special point of mutual recognition; supported as it is by other arguments, and the stronger implication of revelation.

When we reflect, how largely, according to our present apprehension of things, a knowledge of each other in that state, of whatever nature it may be, we are destined hereafter to enjoy, would contribute to our happiness in it; even that consideration, which heightens the beauty of the prospect, tends also to strengthen the expectation, that what we now anticipate, will be hereafter, in reality, indulged us. After our heart-rending separation, to recognise one another in a better world, what ecstasy of joy would it impart! How would it heighten the pleasure of that *conversation which is in Heaven*, to enjoy it with an old and dearly loved friend; with those, whom we had formed to virtue, or to whose forming hand, perhaps, we owed our own; with those, by whom supported, or whom, with mutual aid supporting, we had safely passed through the stormy paths of life, never again to sigh or sorrow more! And, as every consistent degree of happiness, consistent according to God's decree with the nature of man, will, we humbly conceive, be indulged him; this large addition of happiness, we hope and trust, on the best argument that can be produced, the infinite goodness of the Almighty, will not be withheld.

But it may, against this supposition, be urged, that if we be indulged in the knowledge of those friends that are happy, we must also know, by not finding others in those realms of happiness, that they are miserable: and if the former knowledge would increase our happiness, the latter would, proportionably, derogate from it, and tend to make us miserable. But this does not follow;

it is not an inference, that because we know the happiness of happy friends, we must also know the misery of those that fail of happiness. Those may not only be struck out of the book of the living, but out of the memory also of those who are there enrolled. Our knowledge, all our knowledge, we trust, in the next world, will be improved, all but the knowledge of sin and misery; and with that state, revelation instructs us, sorrow is incompatible.*

In further confirmation of this pleasing doctrine, let us advert to the general reception it has, among all nations, obtained; an assent almost as universal as the doctrine of a future state itself. The poets of Greece and Rome inculcated it; and some of the best men, and greatest philosophers, of those polished nations, both believed and taught it. "O glorious day," says one of the greatest of them, "when I shall leave *this sink of profligacy and vice*† behind me, and join my beloved Cato in the assembly of the great and good!" When the wretched African is torn from his family and friends, and sold to a savage master in a distant quarter of the globe; we know his comfort, his consolation, his confidence is in the hopes of meeting, in unmolested realms of happiness, his beloved friends again.

This, in foreign lands, is his song of rapture, when the heart is exhilarated; this is his theme of consolation, when he sits down by the waters of captivity, and weeps. The untutored inhabitant of remote islands in the South Seas, as modern travellers inform us, when, with voluntary incisions she hath

* Revelation, xxi. 4. † Ex hac turba et colluvione.—Cic.

sluiced her blood in agonies of grief for the loss of a husband, a parent, or a child, throws away the instrument of desperation, and calms her troubled mind, in the prospect of meeting again. Nay, and even when the expiring christian bids the friend of his bosom, the object of his affection, or the partner of his cares and joys, the long FAREWELL; how does he feel the agonizing soul supported, which sometimes expires in smiles of sweet complacency, on the hope, the belief, the confidence of meeting again!

If nature teach this, it is the God of nature that so instructs; if religion inculcate it, it is still the doctrine of God; it is the doctrine of Him, who is the essence of goodness and the fountain of truth, of Him who cannot deceive.

Turning from the volume of nature to that of revelation, the same doctrine we shall find enforced. The general tenor of the New Testament represents the good and virtuous in the next world, *living with Christ*, as composing *his kingdom*, and, as such, living of course in community with one another; *heirs, and joint heirs of the same* promise. And in that mutual intercourse with each other, on what principle of reason shall we deny of each other the mutual knowledge? On Peter occasionally urging his own merit, and that of his fellow apostles, in leaving all that they had and following Christ, our Saviour tells them, that, "in the regeneration (the renovation of things), when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, they also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." And who can conceive otherwise of that promise, than that it evidently implies, the twelve apostles so appointed, would

perfectly know each other? And if these judges know each other, why shall we deny the same mutual recognition to those that shall be judged? There seems nothing adducible in disproof of the cotemporaries of those tribes, on that awful occasion, summoned to the solemn tribunal, being known to, and knowing, each other. And if the tribes of Israel shall then know each other, why shall not all mankind?

I have already advanced the opinion, that the stations of the good in the next world, will be appointed with individual distinctions, according to their particular merits in this; in confirmation of which opinion, the prophet Daniel declares, that *they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.** In similar allusion, the apostle to the Corinthians expresses himself: *As one star differeth from another star in glory; so also shall it be in the resurrection.*† And thus individually distinguished in the next world, such distinction being in consequence of our conduct in this, some marks of discrimination, that may distinguish us here, might, I observed, reasoning abstractedly, attach to us hereafter; which doctrine, we hence collect, has from Scripture, also the same implied support.

When our Lord asserts, in confutation of the Sadducean doctrine, *the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob*, to be *the God of the living, and not of the dead;* will it be doubted, that the patriarchs, so eminently distinguished, as being alive, were alive to each other? And, if they then lived in mutual knowledge of each other, it is a plain and obvious inference, that so also shall we.

* Dan. xii. 3. † 1 Cor. xv. 42.

Such was the opinion of the royal mourner, expressed in the words of the text. According to the exposition of the passage already offered, it clearly signifies, that he should meet his son, recognise him, and enjoy his society. Else, where was the consolation implied? If he were never to know him after their separation in this world, know him as a relation, a near and dear connexion; that son was forever lost to him. It is indeed a degree of consolation, to know that our friends, when they depart this life, are happy in the next: but it is not a consolation equal to that of going to them, meeting them, seeing them happy, participating with them in that happiness, and enjoying their society; and nothing less than this, the reflection of David seems evidently to imply.

I have not yet finished my observations on this interesting subject; nor can I comprise them within the limits of this discourse; I must, therefore, refer them, with their proper inferences, to a future occasion. And, in the mean time, I leave to every one, to form his own reflections on the general truth of what I have endeavoured to illustrate and confirm. They will lead him to appreciate this world, and the next. And, on a comparative view, he will easily distinguish, which claims his utmost attention, and which merits his contempt. When he considers, how little difference there is, in point of happiness, between the highest situation of life, and the lowest; he will wonder at the pains he has taken, at the toils he has endured, at the cares it has cost him, to acquire a little and a little more of this world's good, to rise in it a little and a little higher. He will lament, that he has not, with more earnestness, exerted himself

to secure an eminent station in the world to come; where every degree of eminence will be a degree of happiness. And reflections, such as these, cannot but influence his future conduct. Under the impression of them, I therefore leave him; supplicating God, of his infinite goodness, to give efficiency to them in the attainment of everlasting happiness, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Saviour.

EXTRACT FROM

THE MEDITATIONS OF A RECLUSE.

BY JOHN BREWSTER, M. A.

VICAR OF STOCKTON UPON TEES, AND GREATHAM IN THE COUNTY OF DURHAM.

INFLUENCE OF A FUTURE STATE ON MAN AS AN INDIVIDUAL.

After having ranged through a country, where we have studied the manners, and become acquainted with the improvements of its inhabitants, it is a proof of wisdom to make our observations useful to ourselves. After having considered the moral and religious characters of men, as they are influenced by a belief of a future state, and seen the general happiness which such a belief is calculated to produce, let us turn our eyes inward, and contemplate the *individual* felicity of so blessed an expectation. The man of retired and solitary habits, is he, from whom we look for arguments on so important a subject. Abstracted from the world, not by a misanthropic contempt of it, nor by a disgust at any thing he has met with on the scene of life, but retiring from its tumults that he may enjoy a more intimate union with his Maker, he feels the impression of future enjoyments, in the same proportion that he proceeds towards them.

Having considered life under every different appearance, and having acted his part in it, with all the integrity of a man and the piety of a christian, he is ready to

be removed into those regions, where hope is swallowed up of certainty, and time gives place to eternity. A *blessed hereafter* is his firm expectation; and therefore, he is neither afraid for "the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day." His passions being subdued by his reason, and his reason being directed by religion, he enjoys all that serenity of temper, all that cheerfulness of benevolence, which principles so excellent cannot but inspire.

As in ordinary life the vital functions are performed without the accurate observation of every letter, *in speech*, or every limb, *in action;* so the influence of a future state is incorporated so intimately and imperceptibly with a good man's life, that it produces, if I may so express myself, a spontaneous happiness. Pursue a character thus impressed with a solid belief of a future world, and the sentiments which naturally flow from such an impression; follow him through the many and various mazes of his present existence, and you will find that it is not a large increase of possessions which hurries him into irregular joy, nor a small misfortune which plunges him in despair. His "hope is full of immortality." His eye is bent upon an object which possesses his *whole* soul; and has the same effect upon his breast which the sun has upon universal nature—it cheers, revives, inspirits, and enlivens it. The seed, which was originally placed in it, by the hand of the heavenly Husbandman, is nourished by this ray, and brings forth a plentiful harvest.

Every transaction of a good man's life, whether it be exposed to public view, or buried in the sweet tranquillity of domestic privacy, takes its colour from this ge-

neral impression of a state of being, different indeed in its nature from, but in every other respect strongly connected with, the present scene of existence. When we consider the connexion, then, between this world and the next, as implied by nature, and expressed by revelation, shall we not produce this as an important argument, not of consolation, but of pleasure and positive enjoyment, to the breast of that man whose mind is directed into so happy a channel? In material things, we often behold what we cannot reach: but in spiritual and everlasting blessings, our soul anticipates what our sight cannot perceive. "In our pursuit of the things of this world we usually prevent enjoyment, by expectation; we anticipate our own happiness, and eat out the heart and sweetness of wordly pleasures, by delightful forethoughts of them; so that when we come to possess them, they do not answer the expectation, nor satisfy the desires which were raised about them, and they vanish into nothing; but the things which are above, are so great, so solid, so durable, so glorious, that we cannot raise our thoughts to an equal height with them; we cannot enlarge our desires beyond a possibility of satisfaction. Our hearts are greater than the world; but God is greater than our hearts, and the happiness which he hath laid up for us, is, like himself, incomprehensibly great and glorious."*

But even the good man cannot long be a partaker of sublunary enjoyments, without finding those enjoyments interrupted by some painful, though expected cause. The separation of friends by death, cannot but give a pang to those hearts which were once firmly uni-

* Tillotson.

ted by affection. But the religious man, though he feels the stroke sharper than *the shorn lamb*, possesses a cordial of no common strength. He sees the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven—he hears a voice, "Behold! I bring you glad tidings." And the same principle of faith, by which he expects to behold his Saviour on the throne of his glory, and the twelve Apostles, on seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel, leads him to exult in the expectation, that the bond of friendship and affection, which has been broken by death, will be reunited when he comes to the "city of the living God, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

Let it not be thought that there is too much of terrestrial enjoyment in this expectation. The passions and affections of men were not given us for a trivial purpose. It is well understood, that nothing earthly can find a place in that spiritual state of existence. But there is so strong an analogy between the heavenly dispositions which the Gospel recommends to us here, and those which angels and the spirits of good men will exercise themselves in hereafter, that we cannot but imagine, that those who have excited in us such qualities of goodness and benevolence, will be partakers with us in the full perfection of them in a better world. Faith and hope will be then no more, because the hour of certainty is come; but charity, which comprehends every amiable feeling, will enter with us into Heaven, and, no doubt, constitute no small part of our happiness. "Now," says St. Paul, "we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know, even

as also I am known." *I shall go to him; but he shall not return to me—where I am, there shall my servant be*— are the foundations of an argument which inspires the mourner with consolation, and affords a pious confidence which is not to be shaken by metaphysical reasonings. The resurrection of the *same body*, implies an *identity of persons*. Such a consciousness of a preexistent state must bring to our remembrance the *things done in the body;* and, as this consciousness must extend to every person risen from the dead, there is more than reason to convince us, that virtuous friends will meet again in happiness. Our earthly desires, indeed, will be extinguished, we "shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more;" our *vile body*, that is, the body of our humiliation, shall be changed, that it may be fashioned like unto the glorified body of Christ.* The instincts of life must cease with it; but the spiritual and better part of every virtuous connexion will continue for ever. Every relative affection will be renewed with ardour. The cord between married friends will be drawn still closer; their affections will be purer, their delights more exquisite; for they will be, as the text expresses it, *as the angels of God in Heaven.*

There is one objection, which it may be necessary to obviate, as it may be thought to derogate from the *individual happiness* of men, when reflecting on this argument as a source of consolation; namely, that they may not meet in the next world with *some* friends which they have had in this: but they must remember, that such will not have been *virtuous* friends, and therefore not entitled, according to the Gospel dispensation, to the re-

* Phil. iii. 21.

wards of Heaven. It will be no diminution of our happiness, because we shall then wholly acquiesce in the *justice* of God. The veil of passion and prejudice will be removed from our sight; for in that world, where all will be harmony, no disturbed reflections can arise.

FROM THEOLOGIA REFORMATA,

OR,

THE BODY AND SUBSTANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

BY JOHN EDWARDS, D. D.

Twelfth article of the creed, section entitled Heaven.

It is observable that all the ancients have agreed in this, that there is such a *certain place*, where good men shall be recompensed after this life, and enjoy an uninterrupted happiness. Not only *Jews* and *Christians*, but even *Pagans* and *Infidels*, have acknowledged this. *Homer** and *Virgil*† describe the *Elysian Fields*, which are for the entertainment of the good and virtuous. *Plutarch*‡, out of *Pindar*, gives a short description of that place and its diversions. And not only the *Gentile* poets, but the gravest philosophers, speak of this. *Anaxagoras*§ used to point up to Heaven, and say, That was his country. *Plato* tells us that the soul, which is an invisible substance, goes to some other place agreeable to it, pure, invisible,—that place where they shall most certainly be with the good and virtuous God.

In another place he saith, The good and virtuous shall, after death, *go to the islands of the blessed, and en-*

* Odyss. l. 4.
† Æn. l. 6.
‡ Consolat. ad Apollon.
§ Laert. in Vitâ Anaxag.

joy all happiness, and be free from evil. And these islands are *above*, as appears from his description of the place of the blessed, which he gives at another time, telling us that departed souls are seated in the *ethereal* regions. For though the *Stoics* placed the separate souls of the virtuous under the *moon*, or near it, yet the *Platonists* advanced them to the *stars*. They were of opinion that blessed spirits were seated high, and out of the reach of the terrestrial vapours; which a late writer* will not admit of, but places them in the furthest region that encompasses the earth, which is about forty or fifty miles off. *Tully* had no such grovelling thoughts, but tells us in his *Tusc. Quæst.* lib. i. that *in the empyrean orb the soul fixes herself in her ascent after death. Here she wants nothing, but is sustained with the food that the stars is nourished with. From this place she surveys the whole earth, and all that is contained in it, at one view.* The *Americans*† soar not so high, but yet they point to certain hills and mountains, where they brag, they shall be happy after they leave this world. And the followers of Mahomet believe a local heaven.

Yea, this hath been the general persuasion of all those that have believed there is a *heaven;* excepting a few *enthusiasts*, who maintain that Heaven is every where; that is, wheresoever a man is; for it is only in the *conscience.* Thus one of them is bold to aver, that *none have a glory and a heaven but within them.*‡ And another‖ would persuade us, that *a local heaven looks too carnal, and like Mahometism.* But the folly, as well as the falsehood of this, appears from what I have alleged out of the *Scriptures*, which positively and plainly assert Heaven to be a *place.*

* Whiston. † The Indians or Aboriginal Americans.
‡ W. Penn's Rejoinder. ‖ G. Fox's Great Mystery.

Secondly, I consider it as a *state*, a state or condition of happiness: and under this notion it hath these following names in Scripture, which set forth the excellency of it. It is expressed by *feasting*, Luke, xiv. 15. Rev. xix. 7, 9. It is called a *kingdom*, Matt. vii. 21. Acts, xiv. 22. 1 Thess. ii. 12. 2 Tim. iv. 1; and *the kingdom of the Lord*, 2 Pet. i. 11. It hath the denomination of *glory*, John, xvii. 24. Rom. v. 2. Col. iii. 4. 1 Thes. ii. 12; *eternal glory*, 1 Pet. v. 10; *an eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. It is called *life*, 2 Tim. i. 10; and *eternal life*, Tit. i. 2; and *the tree of life*, Rev. ii. 7; and *the water of life*, Rev. xxii. 1. It is set forth by an *incorruptible crown*, 1 Cor. ix. 25; *the crown of life*, Jam. i. 12; *a crown of glory*, 1 Pet. v. 4; *a crown of righteousness*, 2 Tim. iv. 8. This blessedness of the saints is expressed by *white robes*, Rev. iii. 18; iv. 4; vi. 11; xix. 8. It is styled an *inheritance*, Eph. i. 18. 1 Pet. i. 4; a *rest*, or *keeping of a Sabbath*, Heb. iv. 9. All which expressions (many of which are taken from earthly things, and things of this world) furnish us with a *general* notion of the nature of the heavenly state; that is, they acquaint us that it is of unspeakable worth and value, that it is desirable above all things, and that it is attended with infinite complacency and satisfaction.

But I am to pass to a more *particular* survey of this celestial state, and to show that it is, First, a state of *perfect knowledge:* Secondly, of *perfect purity and sanctity;* Thirdly, of *perfect delight and pleasure;* Fourthly, of perfection of *body*, as well as of *soul.*

First, Heaven is a state of perfect knowledge. The glory of the life to come consists in the vision of God, *when*, as we are told by the beloved disciple, the great

favourite of his Lord, and who, therefore, had the highest discoveries of these things, *we shall see him as he is* (1 John, iii. 2), in the just proportions and representations of the Divine Majesty, so far as our finite nature is capable of. *Now we know in part*, saith another apostle, *but when that* way of knowledge *which is perfect*, is come, then *that which is imperfect shall be done away. Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face*, most intimately and entirely, and *we shall know even as we are known;* that is, as men know one another distinctly, by coming up close, and having a near view of one another. We shall then be fully acquainted with all those great secrets and profound mysteries, which here were the matter of our admiration and astonishment. The soul is now as it were buried and entombed in the body, but at death she shall rise and come to herself, and all her faculties shall be wonderfully awakened and enlivened, and the intellect in a more especial manner, as being guide to the rest. The soul here is like a light shut up in a lantern, wherewith we make a shift to direct our steps in the dark night of this world. But afterwards the dark case is laid aside, and the soul being no longer confined and shut up, its dimness vanishes, and it shines forth with an unwonted brightness and lustre. When these clay walls that hinder our prospect, shall be demolished, our horizon shall be enlarged, and then we shall take a full survey of those divine objects which here we had but a faint and glimmering perception of. How poor and mean are our best and most improved notions in this life? Under how many prejudices and unavoidable ignorances do we labour? But presently upon our leaving this world, our

twilight shall be turned into mid-day, the errors in our judgments shall vanish, there shall be no doubts and scruples remaining to perplex our minds, but an infant of a day's growth shall attain to a further and more comprehensive knowledge, than any of the long-lived patriarchs arrived to here; yea, than Adam himself, when he was in his primitive state and innocence.

And now I am speaking of the knowledge which we shall have in heaven, it may be seasonable to inquire whether the saints shall know one another there; that is, whether godly converts, and their children, husbands, and their wives, masters and servants, friends and relatives; and likewise, whether pastor and people shall remember, and take notice of their former relations to one another, and in that state of happiness continue the knowledge they had of one another. First, I answer negatively, they shall not, and indeed they cannot, know one another as to their bodily and outward shape; for it is highly probable, that this shall be so changed from what it was, that there will be no knowing one another on that account. Though glorified bodies be the same as to substance with what they were once, yet the quality of them is so altered, that it will be impossible, at least very difficult, to say that this was the body of such or such a distinct person. Again: Friends, and kindred, and relations, shall not so know one another in heaven, that the tie of affinity or consanguinity shall remain there; nor the tie of superiority and subjection, as between king and people, father and son, husband and wife, be continued. Much less shall there be any carnal affections remaining in that blessed state; for it is not a sensual but a spiritual knowledge and communication

that is among the blessed in heaven. That grosser knowledge and love which related only to the corporeal part, shall be swallowed up in a divine communion with one another.

But, secondly, and positively, it is reasonable to believe, that the saints shall know that they had such and such a relation to one another when they were on earth. The father shall know that such a one was his child; the husband shall remember that such a one was his wife; the spiritual guide shall know that such belonged to his flock; and so all other relations of persons shall be renewed and known in heaven. The ground of which assertion is this, that the soul of man is of that nature that it depends not on the body and sense, and, therefore, being separated, knows all that she knew in the body. And for the same reason it is not to be doubted that she arrives in the other world with the same designs and inclinations she had here. So that the delights of conversation are continued still in heaven. Friends and relations are familiar and free with one another, and call to mind their former circumstances and concerns in the world, so far as they may be serviceable to advance their happiness. The truth of what I say concerning this knowledge, and remembrance of things in the state of glory, may receive some confirmation from that history in Matt. xvii. 3, &c. where we read, that in that glorious interview, which was a glimpse of heaven, the Apostles knew Moses and Elias, and these knew them, though none of them had seen one another. Much more then shall those spirits, who were intimately acquainted with one another on earth, retain their acquaintance and converse in heaven, and call to mind the passages of their lives.

But there is an irrefragable proof of this in Luke, xvi. 25. Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things. And it is as true, that Lazarus remembered him at the same time. Whence I gather, that the knowledge and memory of things done here, remain hereafter. And particularly, that the damned know and remember that they have relations on earth, is evident, from the rich man's being concerned for his father's house, and his five brethren, 27th and 28th verse. It is not to be questioned, then, but that the blessed, likewise, call to mind those that were related to them, and that they are concerned for their good and welfare; and when they meet in heaven, greet them most kindly, and hold commerce with them, and recall the passages of their former conversation. All the ancient and pious fathers agreed in this. St. Cyprian* owns, that our parents, brethren, children, and near relations, expect us in heaven, and are solicitous for our good. St. Jerome† comforts a good lady on this account, that we shall see our friends, and know them.

St. Augustine endeavours to mitigate the sorrow of an Italian widow with this consideration, that she shall be restored to her husband, and behold and know him. And this was an apprehension that the thinking men among the Pagans had attained to. Socrates, a little before he drank his deadly draught, told his friends how valuable a thing it was to have conference in the other life with Orpheus, Musæus, Homer, Hesiod, and other brave men—how happy he should be in their society.

* Serm. de Morte. † Epist. ad Theodorum.

And he often wished to depart out of this world, that he might enjoy the conversation of those excellent persons.

But here it will be objected, that this knowledge and remembrance of things and persons in heaven will be troublesome and afflictive; for this will call to their minds the sins they have committed here, and the evil consequences of them in their lives; and this must needs produce grief and disturbance of mind. But the answer to this is easy: the remembrance of their past miscarriages now pardoned, will not be afflictive, but excite their thankfulness and their joy. And the calling to mind the evils and dangers that befell them, but which they are now, and forever, freed from, will be so far from disturbing them, that it will create an unspeakable delight.* In short, the blessed should not have the remembrance and knowledge of one another, and of what befell them in this vale of tears, unless this were some ways serviceable to advance and heighten their happiness; and, therefore, so far as knowledge and remembrance are *not* serviceable to this purpose, we may assure ourselves that they shall cease and be extinct, before we enter the place of eternal happiness. But, after all, we must not be over-curious and scrupulous. Many things relating to the future state, and particularly to the blessedness of heaven, are hid from us. But this we are certain of, that all that knowledge and understanding of things and persons shall go with us to heaven, that is void of imperfection, and that will in any measure augment our bliss.

* Habet enim præteriti doloris secura recordatio delectationem. —Cic. Epist. lib. v. ep. 12.

A SERMON

BY THE LATE WILLIAM PALEY,

ARCHDEACON OF CARLISLE.

ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF ONE ANOTHER IN A FUTURE STATE.

Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.—*Col.* i. 29.

These words have a primary and secondary use. In the first, and most obvious view, they express the extreme earnestness and anxiety with which the Apostle Paul sought the salvation of his converts. To bring men to Jesus Christ, and, when brought, to turn and save them from their sins, and to keep them steadfast unto the end in the faith and obedience to which they were called, was the whole work of the great Apostle's ministry, the desire of his heart, and the labour of his life: it was that in which he spent all his time and all his thoughts; for the sake of which he travelled from country to country, warning every man, as he speaks in the text, and exhorting every man, enduring every hardship and every injury; ready, at all times, to sacrifice his life, and, at last, actually sacrificing it, in order to accomplish the great purpose of his mission, that he might at the last day "present his beloved converts

perfect in Christ Jesus;" by which I understand St. Paul to express his hope and prayer, that, at the general judgment of the world, he might present to Christ the fruits of his ministry, the converts whom he made to his faith and religion, and might present them perfect in every good work. And, if this be rightly interpreted, then it affords the manifest and necessary inference, that the saints in a future life will meet and be known again to one another: for how, without knowing again his converts, in their new and glorious state, could St. Paul desire or expect to present them at the last day? My brethren, this is a doctrine of real consequence: that we shall come again to a new life; that we shall, by some method or other, be made happy, or be made miserable, in that new state, according to the deeds done in the body, according as we have acted and governed ourselves in this world, is a point affirmed absolutely and positively, in all shapes, and under every variety of expression, in almost every page of the New Testament. It is the grand point inculcated from the beginning to the end of that book. But concerning the particular nature of the change we are to undergo, and in what is to consist the employment and happiness of those blessed spirits which are received into heaven, our information, even under the Gospel, is very limited. We own it is so. Even St. Paul, who had extraordinary communications, confessed "that in these things we see through a glass darkly." But at the same time that we acknowledge that we know little, we ought to remember, that without Christ we should have known nothing. It might not be possible, in our present state, to convey to us, by words, more clear or explicit con-

ceptions of what will hereafter become to us; if possible, it might not be fitting. In that celebrated chapter, the 15th of the Corinthians, St. Paul makes an inquisitive person ask, "How are the dead raised, and with what body do they come?" From his answer to this question, we are able, I think, to collect thus much clearly and certainly, that at the resurrection we shall have bodies of some sort or other; that they will be totally different, and greatly excelling our present bodies, though possibly, in some manner or other, proceeding from them, as a plant from its seed; that, as there exists in nature a great variety of animal substances; one flesh of man, another of beasts, another of birds, another of fishes; as there exist, also, great differences in the nature, dignity, and splendour of inanimate substances—"one glory of the sun, another of the moon, another of the stars:" so there subsist, likewise, in the magazines of God Almighty's creation, two very distinct kinds of bodies (still both bodies), a natural body and a spiritual body; that the natural body is what human beings bear about with them now; the spiritual body, far surpassing the other, what the blessed will be clothed with hereafter. "Flesh and blood," our Apostle teaches, "cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven;" that is, is by no means suited to that state, is not capable of it. Yet living men are flesh and blood; the dead in the graves are the remains of the same; wherefore, to make all who are Christ's capable of entering into his eternal kingdom, and at all fitted for it, a great change shall be suddenly wrought; as well all the just who shall be alive at the coming of Christ (whenever that event takes place), as those who shall be raised from the dead, shall, in the

twinkling of an eye, be all changed: bodies they shall retain still, but so altered in form and fashion, in nature and substance, that "this corruptible shall put on incorruption;" what is now necessarily mortal, and necessarily perishable, shall acquire a fixed and permanent existence. And this is agreeable to, or, rather the same thing as what our Apostle delivers in another Epistle, where he teaches us, that "Christ shall change our vile body, that it may be like his glorious body;" a change so great, so stupendous, that he justly styles it an act of Omnipotence. "According," says he, "to the mighty working, whereby He is able to subdue all things to himself."

Since, then, a great alteration will take place in the frame and constitution of the bodies with which we shall be raised, from those which we carry with us to the grave, it requires some authority, or passage of Scripture, to prove, that, after this change, and in this new state, we shall be known again to one another; that those who know each other on earth, will know each other in heaven. I do allow, that the general strain of Scripture seems to suppose it; that when St. Paul speaks of "the spirits of just men made perfect," and of their coming to "the general assembly of the saints," it seems to import, that we should be known of them, and of one another; that when Christ declares, "that the secrets of the heart shall be disclosed," it imports that they shall be disclosed to those who were before the witnesses of our actions. I do also think, that it is agreeable to the dictates of reason itself to believe, that the same great God who brings men to life again, will bring those together whom death has separated. When his power is

at work in this great dispensation, it is very probable, that this should be a part of his gracious design. But, for a specific text, I know none which speaks more positively than this which I have chosen. St. Paul, you see, expected that he should know and be known to those his converts; that their relations should subsist, and be retained between them; and with this hope he laboured and endeavoured, instantly and incessantly, that he might be able at last to present them, and to present them perfect in Christ Jesus. Now, what St. Paul appeared to look for as to the general continuance, or rather revival, of our knowledge of each other after death, every man who strives, like St. Paul, to attain to the resurrection of the dead, may expect, as well as he.

Having discoursed thus far concerning the article of the doctrine itself, I will now proceed to enforce such practical reflections as result from it. Now, it is necessary for you to observe, that all which is here produced from Scripture, concerning the resurrection of the dead, relates solely to the resurrection of the just. It is of them only, that St. Paul speaks in the 15th chapter of Corinthians. It is of the body of him who is accepted in Christ, that the Apostle declares, "that it is sown in dishonour, but raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power."

Likewise, when he speaks, in another place, of "Christ changing our vile bodies, that they may be like his glorious body;" it is of the bodies of Christ's saints alone, of whom this is said. This point is, I think, agreed upon amongst learned men, and is, indeed, very plain. In like manner, in the passage of the text, and I think it will be found true of every other, in which mankind

knowing one another in a future life, is implied, the implication extends only to those who are received amongst the blessed. Whom was St. Paul to know? even those whom he was to present perfect in Christ Jesus. Concerning the reprobate and rejected, whether they will not be banished from the presence of God, and from all their former relations; whether they will not be lost, as to all happiness of their own, so to the knowledge of those who knew them in this mortal state, we have from Scripture no assurance or intimation whatever. One thing seems to follow, with probability, from the nature of the thing, namely, if the wicked be known to one another in a state of perdition, their knowledge will only serve to aggravate their misery.

What then is the inference from all this? Do we seek, do we covet to be earnestly restored to the society of those who were once near and dear to us, and who are gone before? It is only by leading godly lives, that we can hope to have this wish accomplished. Should we prefer to all delights, to all pleasures in the world, the satisfaction of meeting again, in happiness and peace, those whose presence, whilst they were amongst us, made up the comfort and enjoyment of our lives; it must be, by giving up our sins, by parting with our criminal delights and guilty pursuits, that we can ever expect to attain to this satisfaction.

Is there a great difference between the thought of losing those we love, for ever; of taking, at their deaths or our own, an eternal farewell, never to see them more, and the reflection, that we are about to be separated, for a few years at the longest, to be united with them in a new and better state of mutual existence? Is there, I

say, a difference to the heart of man between these two things? and does it not call upon us to strive, with redoubled endeavours, that the case may truly turn out so? The more and more we reflect upon the difference between the consequences of a lewd, unthinking, careless, profane, dishonest life, and a life of religion, sobriety, seriousness, good actions, and good principles, the more we shall see the madness and stupidity of the one, and the true solid wisdom of the other. This is one of the distinctions. If we go on in our sins, we are not to expect to awaken to a joyful meeting with our friends and relatives, and dear connexions. If we turn away from our sins, and take up religion in earnest, we may. My brethren, religion disarms even death. It disarms it of that which is its bitterness and sting, the power of dividing those who are dear to one another. But this blessing, like every blessing which it promises, is only to the just and good, to the penitent and reformed, to those who are touched at the heart with a sense of its importance; who know thoroughly and experimentally, who feel, in their inward mind and consciences that religion is the only course that can end well: that can bring either them or theirs, to the presence of God, blessed for evermore; that can cause them, after the toils of life and struggle of death are over, to meet again in a joyful deliverance from the grave; in a new and never-ceasing happiness in the presence and society of one another.

A SERMON

BY THE REV. THOMAS GISBORNE, M. A.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE FIRST PART OF THE LESSON APPOINTED FOR THE BURIAL SERVICE.

Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.—1 *Cor.* xv. 20.

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.** Such is the divine authority, such is the comprehensive nature, such are the manifold and supremely important uses of the Bible. Hence it becomes the duty and the wisdom of the ministers of the gospel, in their endeavours to train up the flocks committed to their charge, in the knowledge and obedience of the faith of Christ, from time to time to vary the methods in which they deduce instruction from the word of God; to vary them, however, within such limits only as the Scriptures themselves completely authorise; and to vary them, if in some measure for the purpose of exciting a more lively attention among their hearers, yet principally for the sake of successively impressing on their congregations the different helps and encouragements to holiness, and the different dissuasives from sin, which the sacred writings supply. Thus at one time the preacher will dwell chief-

* 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

ly, though by no means without a decided reference to practice, on doctrines. At another time, regarding the truth and import of the doctrines as established, he will enter into a fuller detail concerning the conduct which a firm belief in them is designed and adapted to produce. Sometimes he will unfold the nature, and evince the efficacy, of faith. Sometimes he will enlarge on holy tempers and good works; those *fruits of the Spirit*, by which genuine faith is manifested and adorned. Sometimes he will build his admonitions on the perceptive parts of the Old, or of the New Testament. Sometimes he will derive them from the memorable histories which those records contain of righteous men protected, delivered, and rewarded by that God whom they served and glorified; or of rebellious despisers of the divine law, condemned to shame, anguish and destruction. Sometimes he will fix his thoughts on a single verse; and will explain with minuteness of investigation, and enforce with copiousness of reasoning, the religious truth which it involves. Sometimes he will select a passage of greater length; point out the bearing and connection of the arguments employed by the inspired Prophet, Evangelist, or Apostle; and apply them so far as they may be lawfully applied, to the edification, the support, and the comfort of christians of the present day. The last of these various methods of obtaining instruction from the word of God, is that which I propose now to pursue. In the present, and in a subsequent discourse (for the subject is too extensive to be compressed with advantage into the compass of a single sermon), it will be my object to direct your minds to that portion of St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, which opens with the verse selected for the text and

extends to the conclusion of the chapter. It is a portion of scripture in the highest degree interesting on account of the momentous truths which it discloses. And it is rendered peculiarly impressive by the solemn and affecting nature of the occasions on which it is publicly employed. It is a portion of scripture which we have frequently heard pronounced over the lifeless bodies of our friends. It is one which others within no distant period shall hear pronounced over our own. The church to which we belong, has wisely and piously endeavoured to render the interment of the dead a source of edification to the living. When pride is humbled, and the heart softened by affliction; when the coffin slowly borne to the house of God, pausing there awhile, on its way towards the grave, or placed within its narrow mansion, and receiving the last looks of surviving anguish, proclaims with a voice which cannot be misunderstood, the speedy and inevitable end of all earthly possessions and enjoyments; the mourner is taught to look to Christ the Redeemer, the resurrection, and the life, in whom whosoever believeth, though he were dead, yet shall he live. He is taught that, if the Lord has taken away, he has taken only what he gave. He is taught that, though man walketh in a vain shadow, yet his hope is truly in the Lord. He is taught that, if God turneth man to destruction, again he saith, "Come again, ye children of men." He is taught, that a voice from heaven hath proclaimed, *Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord: even so saith the spirit; for they rest from their labours.* He is taught not to sorrow as men without hope, for them who sleep in Christ. He is taught, that the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden

of the flesh, are with Christ in joy and felicity. He is taught, that though earth be committed to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; it is in sure and certain hope of the resurrection of the just to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be like his glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself; and shall then pronounce that benediction to all that love and fear God, *Come ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you, from the beginning of the world.* In the passage from the first epistle to the Corinthians, appointed to form a part of the funeral service, this fundamental doctrine of our faith, this glorious and inestimable hope, this unfailing support to the righteous, under all the labours and afflictions of mortality, is established by irresistible arguments; guarded against cavils and misconceptions; displayed under the most animating representations; and practically applied to purposes the most noble.

Let us proceed, in reliance on the blessing of Him, under the guidance of whose Spirit all Scripture has been recorded, to the full consideration of this portion of Holy Writ.

In the earlier part of the chapter, the Apostle discloses the circumstance which had convinced him of the necessity of the lesson which he was about to inculcate. "*If Christ*," saith he, "*be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?*"

Though the Old Testament contains, especially in the writings of the Prophets, many forcible intimations of a future existence, the Sadducees, a powerful and numer-

ous sect among the Jews, denied that there remained a life beyond the grave. Among the heathen, all was obscurity and doubt, or darkness and unbelief. *When they heard of the resurrection of the dead*, some listened with prejudice, contempt, and reluctance; others openly scoffed and *mocked* at the novelty and strangeness of the doctrine. Hence, among the early Christians, whether of Jewish or of Gentile race, there was found a favourable opening for false teachers, who were adventurous enough to undermine and oppose the hope of a future life. Two heretical declaimers of this description, Hymeneus and Philetus, are specified by St. Paul, in his second Epistle to Timothy, as having *erred concerning the truth, saying, that the resurrection is past already:* affirming the promised resurrection to be of a figurative nature; a resurrection to be accomplished in the present world; a resurrection, as they probably explained themselves, from a state of vice to a state of virtue. Though Hymeneus, according to the positive declaration of the same Apostle, had in this fundamental point *made shipwreck concerning faith*, because he had first *put away a good conscience;* though both these corrupters of *the truth as it is in Jesus*, having emancipated themselves from the dread of a judgment to come, would naturally plunge, with little restraint, into flagitiousness, and might thus have been expected to bring general discredit on their opinions, even in the eyes of common observers; yet, *their word* did *eat as doth a canker, and overthrew the faith of some.* Teachers, infected with the same senseless and pernicious principles, had insinuated themselves, and acquired influence among the Christians of Corinth. Well aware, that the

admission of such principles in any degree, tended in an equal degree to uproot Christianity from its foundations, the Apostle strenuously advances forward, to contend for the genuine faith, *the faith* originally *delivered to the saints.* He recalls to the remembrance of his converts, that Gospel, which he had preached to them at the beginning; that Gospel, which they had embraced; that Gospel by which they were to be saved: a Gospel, built on the groundwork of Christ's resurrection from the dead; and establishing by infallible proofs, his repeated appearances after his return from the grave, separately to St. Peter, afterwards to St. James, more than once to all the Apostles collected together, then to an assembly of above five hundred disciples, most of whom were still alive; and, last of all, to St. Paul himself. He warns them, that the reality of the resurrection of Christ was inseparably connected with the assurance of their own future resurrection: that if the dead were not to rise, Christ was not risen; that if Christ were not risen, the Apostles, who had promulgated a gospel proclaiming his resurrection, had testified falsely concerning God; that their preaching had in that case been in vain, an imposture, and a delusion; that the Corinthians had believed in vain, and were yet in their sins, had placed reliance on a falsehood, and were destitute of pardon, and without a possibility of salvation; and that all who had fallen asleep in Christ, all who, for his sake, had encountered persecution and misery, all who had died in his faith, and in full assurance of life eternal through him, had perished.

Having thus fully set before them the consequences which would necessarily ensue, if the pestilent doctrine

with which they were assailed, were founded in truth: a doctrine which would prove that Christ had not risen from the dead; that he had wrought no atonement for sin; that he was unable to perform his promises; that no hope remained for the righteous; that the whole fabric of the Christian religion was a human contrivance, the production of deliberate fraud and unexampled hypocrisy: he cheers them in the words of the text with a solemn statement of the real fact as to the resurrection of their Lord, and the blessed result of his resurrection, with regard to all those who trusted in him.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. "Be not shaken in mind," for thus we may conceive the Apostle addressing his beloved followers; "be not shaken in mind, nor carried about with every wind of doctrine. Hold fast, without wavering, the profession of your faith, and especially of that most important article, on which the truth of the Gospel, and every promise which you cherish of pardon and future happiness depend—the resurrection of your Saviour from the dead.

"Regard not these unrighteous deceivers, who are come among you, subverting your souls, ministers of the prince of darkness, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ: the chief of whom, Hymeneus, I am constrained to deliver unto Satan, I am compelled to subject to the penal infliction of a miraculous and severe disease, that he may learn not to blaspheme; and that, being thus driven by the punishment of the flesh to a conviction of his guilt, his soul may perchance be saved in the day of the Lord.* *Christ is risen from the*

* 1 Cor. v. 5. 1 Tim. i. 20.

dead. He rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures. God did not leave his soul in hell, in the abode of departed spirits; neither did he suffer his Holy One to see corruption. And he *is become the first fruits of them that slept.* He is the first born from the dead, that in all things he might have preeminence. For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell. As by the oblation of the first fruits, the divine blessing was drawn down upon the whole harvest; so has Christ sanctified all the people of God, for whose sins he died, for whose justification he arose. If you believe that Jesus died, and rose again, believe that them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him."

By establishing the fact of the resurrection of Christ, the Apostle had provided a conclusive answer to every objection which could be urged against the future resurrection of the dead, on whatever principle the objection might be founded. Was the resurrection of the dead pronounced impossible? The reply was at hand: "*Christ is risen.* The same power which raised him, is able to raise all men." Was the resurrection described, in the language of profane despisers among the heathen, as an unworthy and undesirable hope? The reply was ready: "*Christ is risen.* Can that hope be unworthy, can that hope be undesirable to men, which, when the Son of God became man, was perfected in him?"

Was the resurrection represented as an uncertain event? The Christian was prepared to answer, "*Christ is risen; and is become the first fruits of them that slept.* He, who hath proved himself to be the Son of God, by rising from the dead, hath declared, that all who are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth."

So deeply, however, was St. Paul impressed with the importance of the subject, that he labours with extreme earnestness in the remainder of the chapter, to confirm and illustrate the truth of the doctrine that all men shall be raised from the dead, and to explain the blessedness of the change which shall then be experienced by the righteous.

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Death came by man: in Adam all die. Adam, transgressing the divine command, by obedience to which, he was to hold his happy state, was expelled from Paradise, lest, by continuing to eat of the tree of life, he should live forever. Barred by the flaming sword of the cherubim from all access to its vivifying fruit, he was abandoned to his natural mortality. His mortal nature descended to his children: from us it shall descend to the latest generation of mankind. So death passed upon all men. By Adam's transgression, every man has been subjected to the sentence, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* But God is a God of mercy. Where sin abounded, he decreed that grace should much more abound. He decreed that the ruin brought on the human race by the prince of evil spirits, who animated the serpent, by Satan, the *father of lies*, who was thus *a murderer from the beginning*, should not be without hope, and without end. He decreed, that by a Being of that very nature, which the devil had degraded and subdued; by a descendant, according to the flesh, from those miserable sinners, whom he now triumphantly led captive at his will; the loss of man should be regained, the

great enemy should, in his turn, be vanquished, and hurled into perdition. He decreed, that the *seed of the woman* should *bruise the serpent's head.* He decreed, that, as by man came death, by man should also come the resurrection of the dead: that *as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* Christ undertook the office of mercy and reconciliation. He undertook, though without sin, to be made in the likeness of sinful flesh; to lay down his life on the cross, there to accomplish, by his meritorious sufferings, an atonement sufficient for the sins of the whole world; there openly to triumph over the principalities and powers of darkness; there to destroy the empire of Satan, and to set free the prisoners of the tomb. *I will ransom them*, he cried, *from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death. O death! I will be thy plague. O grave! I will be thy destruction.* Was the dominion acquired through Adam by death, universal? So also is the redemption from death purchased by Jesus Christ. *There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. The dead, small and great*, shall *stand before God. All that are in the graves, shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

But every man in his own order, Christ; the first fruits: afterwards, they that are Christ's, at his coming.

The Apostle, having evinced, in the preceding verses, the universality of the resurrection, both of the righteous and of the wicked, is solicitous to win the hearts no less than the understandings of the Corinthians to a willing acceptation of the doctrine of a future life. Hence,

throughout the subsequent part of the chapter, he directs their attention almost exclusively to circumstances which pertain to the resurrection of the just. Christ had already fulfilled the prophecies, which had declared that he should be the first who should rise from the dead. He had ascended into heaven, and had entered into his glory. He had already presented himself before the throne of God as the intercessor, the forerunner, and the representative, of his saints. In their due time, and in their appointed order, he will receive them from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, into the kingdom prepared for them, through his covenanted atonement, from the foundation of the world. When the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; the dead in Christ shall rise first. And then shall the righteous who remain alive at that awful hour be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall they all be forever with the Lord.*

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father: when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death: for he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him; it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him; then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

* 1 Thes. iv. 15—17.

Because he who was the Son of God, vouchsafed to become the Son of man; because he who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, he who in the beginning was with God and was God, took upon himself the form of a servant, and humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: therefore God hath highly exalted him. As a partaker of the everlasting Godhead, our Saviour could not be exalted. But in his assumed nature as man, in his character as Mediator, he was capable of being exalted and glorified. *Thy throne, O God, saith the Father unto the Son, thy throne, O God is forever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity: therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.**

"O Thou, who art a partaker of the sovereign and eternal Godhead; thou, who, when thou shalt become incarnate in human nature, shalt completely fulfil my righteous law by the Spirit which shall be poured upon thee without measure: as man shalt thou be raised unto glory foreign and unknown to the nature which thou shalt have assumed, unto a throne of everlasting righteousness." To Christ, as man, hath his Almighty Father given a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. He hath set Christ, as man, at his own right hand in heaven, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world,

* Heb. i. 5, 8, 9.

but in that which is to come; and hath put all things, himself excepted, under his feet. All power is given unto Christ in heaven and in earth. And he must reign. His separate and mediatorial kingdom must continue, until he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power, until he shall have subdued all things unto himself; until after having extended the dominion of his church over the whole earth; after having crushed with the rod of his vengeance all his adversaries, whether rebellious men or revolted angels, he shall complete the glories and evince the everlasting durability of his triumph by the perpetual destruction of death. That last enemy of man, that latest antagonist of our Redeemer, shall assuredly be destroyed forever: for God hath put all things, even death himself, under the feet of his Son. *For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. For Christ took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham; he also himself took part of flesh and blood, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.** Christ shall enthrone his righteous servants in an inheritance of everlasting happiness, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away; where death cometh no more, for they shall die no more, but are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Then, when he shall thus have accomplished his warfare, thus effectually attained and established forever the purposes of mercy for which he took human nature upon him; he shall deliver up the kingdom to his Father: he shall resign his mediatorial kingdom, that separate and delegated sovereignty of the universe which he had

* Heb. ii. 8, 14, 16.

held in a character now no longer necessary, to the Father from whom he had received it; that the eternal Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, may thenceforth be all in all.

Such are the sublime and stupendous views which the word of God displays of the universal empire of the Son of God, who died for us upon the cross, head over all things to his church, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him: he is indeed able to save to the uttermost all that come by him unto God. He who is Lord of earth and heaven vouchsafes to call his people by the endearing name of brethren. He knoweth whereof we are made; he remembereth that we are but dust: for in every thing, except sin, he was made like unto his brethren. We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities: for he was in all points tempted like as we are; and having himself suffered, being tempted he is able to succour them that are tempted. In the days of his flesh, he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save, and he was heard: and his ears are ever open to the prayers of his servants, his arm is ever stretched forth in defence of the heirs of salvation. Look up then to Christ, ye, who, though deeply conscious of your sins, are humbly labouring through the sanctification of his Spirit to serve him in faith and holiness; look up to your glorified King with confidence and joy. From his throne in the heaven of heavens he is beholding you for good. By night and by day he watches over you; shields you from evil, supports you under trials, delivers you from temptation. Fly to him for continual protection: plead with him for

never-failing grace. Depend with unshaken reliance on his promise, on his power, on his wisdom, on his love. He who spared not his own life for you, shall he not give you all things? *All things are yours; whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all things are yours:* all things are ordained, and controlled, and directed for your happiness, because *ye are Christ's.**

But tremble, ye unrepenting sinners, ye who despise and disobey the Gospel: tremble to behold that Saviour whom ye reject, exalted to the dominion of the universe. By your perseverance in transgression you constrain him to be your enemy. You range yourselves in battle array against your judge: you turn a deaf ear to his offers of forgiveness: you pluck down death and misery everlasting with your own hands upon yourselves. What is your confidence? Do you provoke the Almighty to anger? Are you stronger than he? Those whom his love cannot reclaim, his indignation shall overwhelm. Jesus, the Lamb of God, sacrificed for your sins, you despise. Behold Jesus, the Son of God, himself one with the Father, seated on his Father's throne. Behold the dawning of the great day. *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him!* Behold, the dawning of the great day. Behold, the day when *the sun shall become black as sackcloth, and the moon as blood: when the stars shall fall from heaven, and the heaven shall depart as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island shall be moved out of their places:* when all the enemies of Christ, *kings of the earth, and great men and rich men, and chief captains, and*

* 1 Cor. iii. 21, 23.

*mighty men, and every bondman and every freeman, shall hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and shall say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hiae us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of his wrath is come: and who shall be able to stand?** Listen even yet to the voice of mercy. Bend the stubborn knee; bow down the hardened heart. He still waits to be gracious: but the season of trial will have an end. His Spirit will not always strive with man. Your time of trial may be expiring. Humble yourself before Christ, the Lord of Heaven and earth: trust in his atoning blood: pray without ceasing for his grace: and save yourselves, while yet you may, from *the resurrection of damnation.*

* Rev. i. 7. vi. 12, 17.

EXTRACT FROM A SERMON

BY THE REVEREND W. JONES, M. A. F. R. S.

As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.—*Matt.* xxii. 31, 32.

The rewards of another life were promised to the people of God, under the name of a *sabbath* or *rest.* When God's works of this world were finished, he rested. Now it was promised, that into that rest of *his*, his people, if faithful, should *enter*. *Where* could it be, but in heaven? for there God rested: *when* could it be, but after the works of man are finished; that is, after this present life; as the *rest* of God was after the *works* of God? The sabbath, or rest of the seventh day, was therefore, a perpetual memorial, before and under the law, that God had so rested, and that man should rest *with him;* and it was a constant monition, to those who observed it, of an heavenly rest; as the apostle argues more at large in the epistle to the *Hebrews.** You will not wonder at this language of the law, nor find it difficult, when you see how it is copied in other parts of the Scripture. In the Prophet *Jeremiah,* where Rachel mourneth for the death of her children, she is comforted with a promise, that they shall *come again from the land of the enemy;* their death is expressed as a capti-

* This argument is drawn out in the *Lectures on the figurative Language of the Scripture*, p.362, § 6, second edition.

vity; and the region of departed spirits, is the country, in which the grand or the last enemy detains his prisoners. But, saith the Lord, *there is hope in thine end;* that is, in thy *death*, that thy *children shall come again to their own border;* that is, that they shall return at the resurrection, as captives are brought forth from the land of the enemy, and restored to their native country. See Jer. xxxi. 15, 16, 17. In the same language doth the widow of *Tekoah* plead with *David:* she takes the metaphor which arises from the occasion of Absalom's *banishment;* and argues, that though death is appointed unto all men, yet God deviseth means, that his *banished* be not expelled from him. 2 Sam. xiv. 14.

Now, if death and life are thus spoken of in the Prophets, under the similitude of leaving and returning to our native land, this is the land which God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who never enjoyed the earthly Canaan, but were pilgrims and strangers upon earth. This is the land wherein dwelleth righteousness, in which shall be found the true tabernacle of God, the city of God, the new Jerusalem, where saints and angels shall dwell together.

All this, as the apostle assures us, was intended by the promise in the text. God is there called the God of those who are dead in the body, because they are still alive in the spirit; and having prepared for them a city which they shall enjoy at the resurrection, he is not *ashamed to be called their God;* as he would have been, if his covenant with them had extended only to the present life. Because he gave an earthly land, and a city built by men, we think he meant nothing else; whereas these things never were more than similitudes and

pledges; the one of an heavenly country, the other of *a city, whose builder and maker is God.*

Of that place which is reserved for the blessed after the resurrection, we can have no conception, but from what we see upon earth; and, therefore, God doth not describe it in words of its own to Jews or Christians, but gives it to both in sign and figure. Our Saviour Jesus Christ tells us, that he is gone before *to prepare a place* for us. *What* that place is, he does not say. If we would know something more of it, we must look back to his forerunner, the Joshua or Jesus of the law, who went before the people of God, to prepare a place for them in Canaan, and settle them in possession of it. Hence we shall learn, that the place prepared for us is preferable to that we now live in, as the freedom of Canaan was preferable to the bondage of Egypt; that there are *many mansions* in the heavenly land, as Canaan was divided and laid out into many quarters, for the orderly reception of the several tribes of Israel; that, as they all went up to worship at Jerusalem, so shall all the tribes of the earth, who shall be saved, assemble together to worship in the heavenly city of God.

Other particulars we might gather; but this is the only way in which we can learn; and we can go no farther than this method will carry us, in understanding the promises of God. Jewish priests and prophets, even though they had taken their lesson from the philosophers of heathenism (who thought their deities delighted in good eating and drinking), could have come no nearer than they have done; for the things of another life are not to be described, as they are, in words which man can understand; it is, therefore, never attempted:

Since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen— what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him. Isaiah, xiv. 4.

Our present life is not a state of knowledge, but of *expectation*, on which alone the patriarchs and friends of God subsisted so long as they were here. In the want of due conception, Jews and Christians are all upon a level; all the information they can receive is conveyed under the words, life, rest, a promised land, redemption from enemies, a city of God, new heavens and new earth, and such-like signatures of visible things; for which reason the doctrine of the Prophet is taken up and reasserted by the Apostle. See 1 Cor. iii. 9.

I might add other things, if the time would permit, on the character of *Enoch* and *Elijah*, and the idea given of *death* to the priests, and rulers, and kings of ancient times. A state of life after death could never be unknown to those who knew that Enoch was actually taken into it. His character was handed down to the times of the Gospel, as that of an evangelical prophet, who warned the people of the old world of a judgment to come: *Behold, the Lord cometh*, &c. See Jude, ver. 14. *Elijah* went up alive into heaven; whence it is known to all those who knew the fact, that men may live in heaven; and so the Jews must of necessity have learned, from the rapture of Elijah, what we learn from the ascension of Christ; though of heaven itself we know nothing but from the sky which we behold with our eyes. When it is said of the saints of old, that they *slept* with their fathers, what could be meant but that they should *awake?* as it is actually applied in the pro-

phet Daniel, chap. xii. 2: *Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.* So, when it is said of Moses and Aaron, that they should *be gathered to their fathers*, it is therein affirmed, that their fathers were still alive; which sense is so obvious, that I find it insisted upon, even by Jewish commentators.

From what has been said, I hope you will see farther than some learned men have done into the resurrection of the dead, and the life everlasting, as they were promised under the law of Moses; to show us which, against the blindness and perverseness of the Sadducees, was the design of our blessed Saviour in the text.

It may be proper now to clear up a difficulty or two, and make some reflections to render this subject of moral use to us.

It has been insisted upon, that temporal blessings in the land of Canaan were plainly promised to the people under the law of Moses; and thence it has been argued, that these were the *only* sanctions of the law, the *only rewards* of obedience. But this doth by no means follow; because *godliness* under the Gospel hath the promise both of *this life* and of *that which is to come;* and it is still the effect of *righteousness*, to exalt every *nation*. The present blessings of this life do not exclude the blessings of the other; neither can a *nation* be blessed, *as such*, but in the present life. The promises of God are very nearly alike under both Testaments. We, Christians, have a promise, that, even here, our obedience shall be rewarded with *houses and lands:* but, lest we should forget what is to come, the enjoyment of these things is tempered with *persecutions* (Mark, x.

30); even as God, for the correcting and spiritualizing the minds of those who were under the law, preserved wicked heathens for thorns in their sides, and terrors upon their borders. The holy patriarchs never enjoyed the blessings promised in their literal sense. To them, therefore, as to us, they were no more than signs of better things; and under every age of the Mosaic dispensation, they who entered by faith into the ways of God, and the language of his law, voluntarily renounced, like the family of the *Rechabites*, the enjoyment of this world, and made themselves pilgrims and sojourners upon earth, such as the best of their fathers had been before, and as all good men were to be after.

It has been objected, farther, against the doctrine of immortality in the Old Testament, that life and immortality were *brought to light by the Gospel.* But, if by *bringing to light*, we understand the revealing of what was *not known before*, the expression is not true; because the resurrection of the dead was certainly known to the Jews before the Gospel; and the greater part of them, in our Saviour's time, never thought of disputing it. Therefore, when it is said, that immortality (the word is *incorruption*, and means, the incorruption of the body) was *brought to light*, the sense is, that not the doctrine, but the *thing itself*, was brought to light, by the fact of our Saviour's *resurrection*, and the actual *abolition* of the power of *death.* It might, indeed, be said, with respect to all mankind, that the thing was brought to light; but, if it is understood of the doctrine, that can be applied only to the Gentiles, who had no knowledge of the resurrection; and the wisest of them mocked as soon as they heard of it. Therefore, take it

either way, and there will be no objection from this text against the doctrine of the resurrection in the Old Testament.

But it is objected, farther, that if this doctrine is revealed in the law and the Prophets, it is in a way so faint and obscure, as if it were intended that the Jews should not learn it. This merits consideration; however, if the Jews did *learn* it, and *receive* it, as they undoubtedly did, then there must be *in us* some misunderstanding of the case. Accordingly, we shall find, and must allow, that there is an obscurity in the law, arising partly from design in God the Lawgiver, and partly from ignorance in man. When we read the historical, prophetical, or ceremonial part of the law, we see the wisdom of God there delivering itself in parables; and for the same reasons as our Saviour did afterwards; covering up the precious doctrines of life under a veil: which method, while it rendered them still more precious to the wise, who could see and understand, secured them from profane heathens and carnal Jews. They could not despise them, for they could not see them.*

The life and spirit of the signs and figures in the Christian mysteries are now as effectually lost to our deists, socinians, and other like disputers of this world. They who do see through this method, which God hath constantly observed from the beginning of the world,

* The sense I have here fallen upon, coincides so exactly with the words of a Jewish writer, that I shall set them down for the reader to reflect upon: "Servans *reconditam*, et relinquens doctis et sapientibus *eruendam*, ex variis legis locis, illam *futuram beatitudinem*. Atque hac eadem causa est, cur nulla *mentis aperta* fiat in Genesi: sub *metaphora* tantùm proponatur."—Menasseh Ben Israel, de Resur. Mort. lib. i. cap. 13.

from the *tree* in Paradise, to the *lamb* of the passover, and from thence to the *bread* of the Christian sacrament, see the better for it: while those who have not an heart to understand are blinded, and confirmed in their unbelief. Not only the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the dead, are doctrines of the law lost to a carnal mind, but all other great doctrines are lost in like manner: the corruption of man's nature, the bondage of sin, purification of the heart by grace, atonement by the shedding of blood, the true character of the Messiah, the calling of the Gentile world, were none of them to be found in the law, according to the sense of this carnal Jew; neither are they now seen by the disputing Christian. Therefore, let us all endeavour to put off the Jewish spirit, and pray, in the words of the Psalmist, who understood all these things, *Open Thou mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of thy law!* The letter of the law is the shadow of truth, and nothing more. Of this, some have been ignorant, while the world allowed them the reputation of great learning; and this ignorance produced the monstrous proposition published amongst us of late years, that a revelation came to man from the living God, without life in it; which is so far from being an improvement in literature, or divinity, that it must be shocking to the ears of intelligent Christians; and being false and heretical, stands condemned in the articles of the church of England.

But now, lastly, give me leave to tell you, that the *moral* doctrine to be drawn from the words of the text, is a matter of great consideration; and I desire you will lay it up in your mind. God calls himself *the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.* This is the title he has chosen;

his favourite *memorial to all generations:* but in this title he declares his relation to his friends and servants, when they are *dead.* He is our support in life; and that is a blessing and an honour to us; but he delights rather to consider himself as our *life in death;* and as such, we ought to consider him daily. We are all solicitous to raise ourselves in the eyes of our neighbours, and to be reckoned among the higher orders of the living: whereas it should be our chief care to consider, with whom we shall be numbered when we are dead. Let, then, the vain and ambitious be striving to be in the class of the mighty, the wealthy, and the honourable of this world, while they live; but let us rather provide that we may be numbered with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, when we are dead. Then will God be with us when we are no longer with men; and we shall rest in the hope, that he will soon fulfil the promises made to the holy patriarchs, our spiritual forefathers, by raising us from the dead, and giving us a place in the heavenly city, which he hath prepared for them and for us, *that they without us should not be made perfect.*

A SERMON,

BY THE LATE REV. J. DRYSDALE, D. D. F. R. S.

ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF EDINBURGH, ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S CHAPLAINS, AND PRINCIPAL CLERK TO THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

ON THE HOPE OF HEAVEN.

But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly.—*Hebrews*, xi. 16.

When we take an attentive view of mankind, and compare their nature with their present condition and character; when we consider the great capacity of the human soul, and the high improvement of which it can admit, both in knowledge and virtue, and at the same time reflect, that this capacity cannot be filled up, nor this improvement carried to perfection, in the present state; what can we conclude, but that there shall be another state where all that is wanting shall be made up, and the soul shall be improved to perfection, and rendered complete both in worth and in happiness? How far do the best characters amongst men fall short of that perfection which the soul aspires to, and seems to be intended for? We cannot easily conceive, therefore, that God will cut off the righteous in the midst of their progress towards this great object, or stop their ascent towards himself. It seems probable, for the same rea-

son that he originally created the soul of man, that he will preserve it to attain its proper end.

The marks of wisdom, appear in all the works of God; and nothing can be more consonant to wisdom, than to finish the works which it has designed; nor can we imagine any thing more contrary to wisdom, than to leave its purpose half executed, as if it had repented, or, by mistake, formed an improper design at first. Death, therefore, which, at first sight, looks like an extinction of both soul and body at once, we have reason to conclude to be no more than a change from one state of existence to another. But to remove all doubts, and to confirm this conclusion, our holy religion has brought to clear and certain light a future and immortal life, where the righteous shall be advanced to a higher degree of still growing dignity and happiness than can at present be either attained or conceived—even to all of which they are capable. This light, then, furnished by the Gospel, should enlarge our minds, elevate our affections above present things, and inspire us with the most ardent desire for that happy state which the Gospel has laid open to our hopes,—for *that better country which is heavenly.*

This desire of heaven, which the happiness thereof naturally excites in us, tends directly to produce the best effects upon our affections and conduct, during our journey to so exalted a settlement. These effects of desiring *that better and heavenly country*, it is our present purpose to point out. But before we proceed to the consideration thereof, it is proper to premise one observation, namely, that in order to reach heaven at last, it is by no means necessary that we should neglect

or renounce the concerns of our present state. We are not to hide ourselves in a dark and sullen solitude, and lead an unsocial and monkish life, which is useless, at the same time that it may be deemed innocent. This world is, indeed, appointed to be our passage to heaven, but not at all to be an inactive passage. We are not to steal our way through it, nor to decline those difficulties and dangers, by means of which, it is the will of God, that we should be prepared and ripened for future glory. To attempt this, would argue total ignorance of the nature of heaven, and of the present state of man.

We are to remember, that, however troublesome our circumstances may be, it is the will of God that we should conform to them; and he will never admit any to the rewards of heaven, who are not active in using the proper means of being qualified for such sublime enjoyments. So glorious and inviting a prospect is surely worth contending for, and may well animate us with patience and resignation under all present trials. The very best reason that men can have for retiring from the world, is, that they may avoid the temptations and difficulties every where to be met with: but with what countenance can those men address a prayer to the throne of grace, or expect to be admitted into the heavenly society, who, while they are on earth, are use less to the society of mankind, abstracting themselves, as much as possible, from all correspondence with their brethren, and contributing nothing to their general welfare? What recommendation can such men carry, to obtain a welcome reception among the righteous and good above? Can they think it will be an argument in

their favour that they can say, "We have escaped from the temptations, and fled from the troubles of human life, but cannot indeed pretend that we have contributed to its happiness?" Would not this betray so base and self-interested a disposition as would render them unworthy of any well-ordered society on earth, and much more of that affectionate and blessed one in heaven? Instead, then, of flying from the world, to shun its troubles, we are, when duty calls, and opportunity of doing good presents itself, to encounter them with resolution, and thereby promote the exercise of our patience. The trials of the present life are wisely ordered with a view to train up our minds for celestial happiness, to enable us to form a just judgment of it, and to value it the more from comparing it with what we shall leave behind us upon earth. We ought, then, to occupy an active station in the world, as far as our condition will admit, both for the sake of doing good to others, and also that we may receive from them assistance and mutual improvement, and may have it in our power to know experimentally the very small value and unsatisfying nature of earthly felicity.

Those who think to pass towards heaven, unacquainted with the changes, trials, and difficulties of this life, and without taking their fate in the world along with their fellow-passengers, or without concerning themselves in their welfare, cannot be in a proper state for enjoying the happiness of heaven. If we consider the matter duly, we shall find that we have no good reason to be terrified or dispirited on account of the trials and hardships which accompany our situation upon earth; for even in these has God been pleased to mani-

fest his goodness and regard to us. He thought it not proper to bestow heaven upon us at once, but has left us to choose it for ourselves, to choose it as the most inestimable of all blessings, indeed, as our only chief good; to choose it after having had experience of the emptiness of every present enjoyment. We must not, therefore, renounce the correspondence of this world, nor desert that station which God has assigned us in it. At the same time we must always remember, that *here we have no continuing city;* and we must keep that better country to which we are bound, continually in our eye, and as the object of our most earnest desire; which desire will in every sincere Christian produce, and ought in all Christians to produce, the following happy effects:

I. It tends to animate us to maintain a strict and watchful attention to ourselves, that we may not be misled or ensnared by any of the temptations which surround us.

The hope of arising to high degrees of greatness and felicity is evidently one of the most vigorous springs of human actions, and whose impulse rouses the mind to the greatest activity in the exercise of all its faculties. To have some one important plan in view, must surely have a mighty influence on the whole conduct of a man's life, even upon those circumstances of it, which have but a remote connexion with the principle to which he is aspiring. Whenever any person comes to have one predominant wish which he seeks to gratify above every other thing, it exerts a visible efficacy on his whole character, determines him to conform all his behaviour to one view, and brings all his dispositions under subordination to it.

Thus those men in whom covetousness or ambition is the ruling principle, generally make all their other desires subservient to that one, and consistent with it; and are careful to avoid whatever may divert their attention, or tempt them away to other views. In the same manner, the man whose desires and affections terminate on the happiness of heaven, it might justly be concluded, would act in a perfect consistency with so grand an expectation. Yet there is nothing more certain, than that the children of this world are wiser than the children of light; that is, they show more judgment in order to acquire some temporal advantage, than the children of light do to obtain immortal glory. This is owing to the weakness of the desire of heaven. The happiness thereof lies beyond the reach of our senses, nor can it be completely understood by present experience. Hence it is often found to have but a feeble and languid influence, in preserving the mind resolute and steady, amidst present temptations, which have a great advantage by being near at hand, and ever acting immediately on our senses. There is no man, if the question were put to him, who would not answer, that he wishes, nay, that he entertains hopes to be happy hereafter; but so obscure and indistinct are the conceptions which most men form of this future happiness, that they do not sink deep into their minds, so as to have any regular influence upon their conduct. They, and they only, who are animated by a lively principle of faith and love, can disengage themselves from the entanglements of present objects, and transport themselves to a near and familiar contemplation of the joys of immortality; they alone can best preserve uniform and steady resolutions of goodness in this world. He that hath this

hope and desire strong within him, with clear and lively impressions of it working upon his heart, will be ever *purifying himself as God is pure.*

It has indeed been observed, that he who acts aright, merely from the hope of reward, is not actuated by just and proper principles, but by interested and unworthy motives: and, no doubt, if the happiness of heaven consisted only in sensible entertainments and delights, the hope and desire of such happiness might engage men of corrupt minds to a course of life apparently good and virtuous, without having their hearts purified, or their selfishness in the least abated by it. But the hope and earnest desire of heaven, such as it is described by the Gospel, far from being a narrow or contracted principle, can spring up and flourish in no man but one of real goodness and generosity of heart. For what is the desire of heaven but the desire of increasing in goodness and resemblance to God? What can be a stronger evidence of inward purity, than to hope and seek for that inheritance which is perfectly pure and incorruptible? What can be a clearer demonstration of real goodness, than eagerly to aspire after an admission to the blessed society of the best of men now exalted to communion with God, who is himself the unspotted original of every thing that is good, amiable, or excellent? The man who keeps this glorious prospect in his eye, must of consequence be habitually discovering and exerting, through the whole tenor of his life, those excellent principles which he knows are absolutely requisite to support his high expectations. As the height of his ambition is to be happy in the perfect exercise of virtue and goodness in the life to come, he will endeavour to render himself as happy as he can here,

by cultivating such degrees of goodness as are attainable at present. As he desires to be a member of that society where he shall be absolutely free from the corruptions of sin, this must have a most powerful influence in preserving him on his guard against the temptations to which he is exposed in this lower world. It will produce a close and habitual and jealous attention to his own behaviour, and to those restless passions which incessantly solicit for indulgence. The *everlasting weight of glory*, on which his desire is fixed, is a sufficient counterbalance to the vain desire of the light and empty enjoyments of this passing state. In a word, every pursuit of his life will be brought under dependance to his heart, will be suited and attempered to those pure and refined satisfactions which he hopes to enjoy in the regions of light and immortality.

Secondly,—The real desire of the better country in heaven tends to inspire us with unaffected love and mercy to the whole human race, and to dispose us to the habitual exercise of these good affections.

As heaven is a society, the members of which live in perfect harmony and union, we should endeavour to maintain the like conduct here, and live as becomes those who are one day to be citizens of the heavenly state. Vain and deceitful is the desire of that better state in heaven, which is not accompanied with a real relish for those exercises of which its happiness shall in a great measure be composed. Love and charity abide forever; they furnish the high enjoyments of heaven: so that without possessing a strong taste for, and an ample portion of, these excellent affections, we cannot be qualified to share in these celestial enjoyments. Let us

be ever moving forward towards them, careful to relieve, exhort, and encourage each other under all present difficulties. Would it look as if we were greatly bent to reach the heavenly country at last, if we should suffer ourselves to fall out for trifles by the way? Can any thing be more unseemly, than for a man who pretends to desire, above all things, the *better country* in heaven—that land of tranquillity, love, and peace—to be ready, on every slight provocation, to yield to the transports of anger and revenge; or even to indulge an indifference about the welfare of his brethren and fellow-travellers? But let us, mindful of the great object of our desire, restrain ourselves when we feel the very first motions of passion rising within us, by reflecting how unworthy it is for us to give way to them,—for us, who openly and avowedly aspire to be members of a state of perfect harmony and love! Let us consider with attention the shameful inconsistency of such conduct; and how far wrong it would be for us to indulge in passions cruel or unkind. We know that God will interpret the love and regard we exercise towards our brethren as so much service done to himself. *Verily*, shall our blessed Saviour then declare, *forasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me.** If we habitually exercise love and kind affection to all our brethren upon earth, we shall be joyfully received by the inhabitants of the better country in heaven, as properly fitted for admission there, where nothing inhuman or unfriendly, nothing envious or malicious, nothing indifferent, selfish, or indelicate, can ever find a place.

* Matthew, xxv. 40.

Thirdly,—The desire of future happiness tends to compose our minds to a generous indifference towards all the deceitful pleasures and satisfactions of the present state. It disposes us to regard them in no higher view than as the means of relieving and lightening the heaviness of our journey through this world.

The world has been, with some propriety, compared to an inn, where we have to spend this darkness or night of life; and, since the time we have to pass in it is but short and transient, it does not appear a matter of great moment, though we be not accommodated altogether according to our wish. Can we be thought very earnest to arrive at last at the heavenly settlement, if we make a great bustle about the inconveniencies of our journey? It might be expected that the greatness of the heavenly felicity would so engross our attention as to make us comparatively above our situation here below. Having this future happiness in our eye, can we deem ourselves miserable for the want of a little transient honour, or a little precarious power, during a few years upon earth, when immortal honour and real dignity await us in heaven? Should it greatly disquiet us, that we lead an obscure and unmarked life here; or, that we are not borne through the world on the applauding reports of fame; when, in due time, we shall enjoy the approbation of God, and of the wise and righteous citizens of heaven, the most worthy object of desire? The most obscure and contemned person among us, who may now be the sport of fortune, and disregarded by every one, on account of the meanness and poverty of his outward condition and appearance,—even this person may be singled out by the all-seeing eye of God, on account of the

innocence and integrity of his life, and exalted to unfading glory in the end; while many of those who have dazzled the world by the splendour of their name, but, at the same time, made it unhappy by their ambition, may be disregarded by God, and their name left to perish in everlasting darkness and oblivion. Should it grieve us that we do not flow in affluence, that we are not *clad in purple, and fare not sumptuously every day?* seeing these things, neither add much to the happiness of the present life, nor tend to prepare us for a better. How low must we be in the estimation of Almighty God, if we prefer the dross of earthly riches to that *fullness of joy*, those pure and unfading pleasures of mind which flow forever in his presence; or, if we think ourselves miserable for the want of that, which, compared with future bliss, is altogether vanity? In truth, what a poor temptation are riches and fame, the honours and pleasures of this world, when fairly estimated, to seduce our hopes from the bright and unsullied glory of heaven? And yet, on account of these, how often have the comfort and harmony of private life been interrupted, nay, entirely annihilated? How empty and unsatisfying are all earthly delights in comparison of the blessed serenity which possesses that soul which can aspire beyond them, and raise its hopes to heaven! Let us then endeavour to alienate our minds and hearts from their too great attachment to these meaner pleasures. There are far more substantial, even divine entertainments, to animate our ambition and invite our search: even the distant hope thereof can effectually lift the righteous mind above this world, and compose into a serene, untroubled joy,—a joy unshaken by any of those tempests of passion that attend the vehe-

ment pursuit of worldly happiness; undisturbed by that envy, covetousness, and ambition, and that rage, malice, and revenge, which often distract the hearts of those who cannot obtain such a fading object; and free from that pride and arrogance of spirit which are often the effects of enjoying it to the full. While *we have our conversation in heaven*, our thoughts will be insensibly and gradually disengaged from being too deeply interested in the vain commerce of the present life; and our minds put in a capacity of obtaining a present foretaste of the inexpressible enjoyments of the blessed above.

Fourthly,—The earnest desire of heaven will dispose our minds to a ready compliance with the will of divine Providence, and to a pious and becoming resignation under all the sufferings and calamities of the present state.

A righteous man cannot give way to despondency, since he may hope, that in a little time all shall be well, and that he shall enter into the possession of everlasting felicity as the reward of his patience. In expectation of this, he forgets the bitter sharpness of pain, and even rejoices in the midst of agony. It must yield inexpressible comfort to a good man, when oppressed with sickness and disease, to raise his thoughts to that happy state above, where he shall be released from this frail and corruptible body, and in its stead shall receive one, light and active, incorruptible and immortal as the soul itself, and shall enjoy an uninterrupted vigour through everlasting ages. If, at any time, sorrow seizes his heart for the loss of good and virtuous friends, who were deservedly the delight and comfort of his life, whose pleasing and useful

conversation, and mutual benevolence, he might justly place among his highest enjoyments, let him consider that good and virtuous persons have no reason to indulge an obstinate melancholy on account of the death of worthy friends like themselves; for this would give reason to suspect that such lasting sorrow did not proceed from a principle altogether right, but rather from a want of confidence in God. As there is ground to believe that these worthy friends have made a happy change, it is plainly unreasonable to indulge an excessive sorrow on their account, as if they were sufferers in extreme: and the loss which we ourselves sustain (which is certainly one of the greatest that mankind are liable to), may be borne with the greater firmness from the reflection, that they have stepped but a little before us, that our stay behind them will not be long, that the time is not far distant, when they shall be restored to us again, more worthy of our esteem and affection than ever, and when there shall not be the least danger of any farther separation.

Perhaps it may be our lot to meet with a great deal of bad usage at the hands of the unworthy; but this may be the more easily borne, when we look forward to that happy establishment that awaits us in heaven. By careful reflection indeed, we must be satisfied, that such men are far more the objects of our pity, than we are of their contempt. While we can entertain the hope of enjoying the favour of God in heaven, and are conscious of possessing a degree of it here, we may well look down with indifference on the frowns of pride and the assaults of malice. While we are on a progress to an immortal inheritance in heaven, why should we suffer the tranquillity

of our minds to be disturbed, and our passions irritated, by the clamours and reproaches of the wicked?—The same enlivening prospect will also most effectually support and encourage us, if we should ever be subject to the pressures of indigence and poverty. If we are good and virtuous, notwithstanding the outward meanness of our condition and appearance, we shall possess a certain eminence and nobility of spirit, which cannot fail of meeting with a suitable reward in the end. If all be well within, our outward condition is hardly worth the minding. We have no reason to suspect that God neglects us, because we are not placed in the midst of affluence. He never intended that such should be the reward of the righteous. A good man would be but poorly rewarded, were he to have only the means of living in affluence in a world like the present. God has infinitely greater things in reserve for his faithful servants. Besides an approving conscience, which is a *continual feast to the soul*, and of itself has considerable power to bear us up under the severest calamities, we have also an everlasting happiness in prospect, a bright reversion provided for us, in the better country in heaven, to which, in a short time, we shall find admission: and surely, for so short a time, we may be content to live any how. If we are happy in the issue, we have reason to think that we have made an easy conquest. We may be glad to compound for a little short-lived trouble here, when we have the well-grounded hope of complete blessedness, to crown our victory in the conflict. Let us remember, that, through many trials, God rears up his family to that blessedness; and there is no better recommendation to his favour, than resig-

nation and acquiescence under all his dispensations. If we patiently endure this rough and wintry season of calamity, we are encouraged to expect, that, in the end, we shall be counted worthy of enjoying a purer and serener climate. While we bend our steps towards heaven, let us not repine at the hardships of the way, nor at the roughness of the passage. Here, dwell pain and danger, with their troublesome and numerous attendants; but there, *sorrow and sighing shall fly away; all tears shall be wiped from our eyes*, and joy spring up eternal in our souls. Here, we have to labour and watch, and to fight our spiritual enemies; there, triumph awaits us; and there, we shall reap and enjoy the fruit of all these labours. Here, the air is inclement, and big with contagion; there, it shall be pure, serene, and salutary. Here, we are in a strange country, absent from our native land; there, we shall find our proper home, and all our happiness; and thither our Saviour, and our best friends, have gone before us. These have shown us how to behave, while on our journey to join them. With what unconquerable spirit have numbers undertaken and executed distant journeys, despising the perils and fatigues to which they were exposed; and all, perhaps, for the sake of seeing a few curiosities, or of saying, after their return, that they had seen them. This serves to show the great power of strong desire upon the heart and active faculties of man; and shall not the earnest desire and hope of heaven, the region of goodness, virtue, and spiritual liberty, the only true glory and happiness of man; shall not this inspire us with resolution and patience, amidst all the dangers and sufferings, through

which we have to pass, and which are not to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed to us?

Fifthly,—The hope of future happiness tends, most effectually, to arm our minds against the approach of death, and to extinguish all its terrors.

To those who have not heaven in their eye, death must appear a frightful and desperate step, while nothing but darkness lies beyond it. It is not possible for a thinking man to leave this world, without reluctance and dejection, unless he has endeavoured to secure an interest in a better state, and rendered that better state familiar to his thoughts. How formidable must death appear to the man, who, after a life spent in all the tumult and vanity of this world, and after being known to all around him, approaches his last moments, unknown to himself, uncertain whither he is going, and forced by the dreadful forebodings of conscience, either to plunge into the dismal prospect of not being at all, or of being forever miserable! But, on the other hand, those who, being inspired with an ambition suited to their dignity as the sons of God, are habituated to raise their minds above this world, and stretch their view to the happy and unchangeable settlements of heaven—those can look upon death in quite a different light, and welcome its rudest approaches with intrepidity, and even with cheerfulness. Let us then look forward to that joyful prospect, and behold the light of everlasting day dawning from afar; and then death, which appears so formidable, will assume a gentler aspect, disarmed of all its stings, and stript of all its terrors. While these high expectations possess our souls, the present world, with all its boasted enjoyments, will have little power to seduce us; and the period of our

leaving them, will be considered as a deliverance from a state of vexation and calamity. Whatever we may fondly think of our present habitation, it is the kingdom and residence of death, a state of ignorance, sin, and corruption. Hence, what we call death, may, to a good man, be more properly styled the beginning of life. For him, therefore, to be afraid of death, is to be afraid of a good thing, of being raised to a state of light and gladness, and of living in a rank suited to the dignity of his nature. Whoever can entertain the lively hope of this exaltation, will be ready to bless God that he was created mortal,—that he shall not be shut up forever in this narrow and uneasy confinement. He would not *live here always;* but he rejoices in the prospect of the day approaching, when his immortal spirit shall be fully enlarged from this darkness of ignorance, this subjection to sin, and those oppressing calamities, under which it is at present so heavily weighed down. In order, then, to our obtaining such a greatness of soul as may effectually animate us against the fears of death, our desire of a better country in heaven must take full possession of our heart; and we must, *by a patient continuing in well-doing aspire after glory, honour, and immortality;* and seek to resemble God in those perfections which shall be the subject of our endless praises and adoration, in heaven.

Let us, therefore, pray to God, that he would impress this blessed desire and hope upon our minds. Then, *though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we shall fear no evil;* for God shall be our conductor and deliverer: then shall we bid defiance to the fiercest assaults of our enemies; for we know, *that though worms destroy this body, yet in our flesh shall we see*

God: this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. Let us then lay aside every weight, that we may, without wearying, *run the race that is set before us*, and in due time obtain the prize we so earnestly desire.

A FUNERAL ORATION,

BY THE REVEREND P. DODDRIDGE.

As we advance from one stage to another in the journey of life, we grow still more familiarly acquainted with its various afflictions. And this is the constitution of a wise and gracious God, who is thus training us up for that world, where we shall be above the need of sorrow, and so forever above the reach of it. In the mean time, our Heavenly Father doth not leave us comfortless; and, blessed be his name, his *consolations are not small.* On the contrary, they are most important, as well as various, and so accommodated, both to the weight and to the variety of our distresses.

We are now an assembly of mourners, gathered together around the grave of a very worthy and excellent person. Some of us have lost one of the most affectionate of parents; others, a wise, watchful, and diligent pastor; and all that knew him to any degree of intimacy, so faithful and so tender a friend, that we must be strangely happy, if we find a great many like him, in this imperfect and impoverished world. But there are comforts in the word of God, suited exactly to such a case as this, and expressly designed to teach us, that we should not *sorrow as those who have no hope*, for the removal of such, as, like him, *sleep in Jesus.* God would have us cheered in such a touching circumstance; and that the comfort may be administered in the most proper and effectual manner, he puts words into our mouth upon such

an occasion, that we may not be at a loss, even when our own are swallowed up: many words, which have been through succeeding ages, ever since they were written, the joy of dying and surviving Christians, in whatever circumstances they might die or survive. And these consolations are, indeed, like some kinds of rich perfume, which retain their fragrancy from one age to another; but with this glorious difference, that whereas those cordial productions of nature gradually lose their sweetness, though by slow degrees, these consolations rather grow more and more powerful, as the great objects of that hope which they administer, come nearer and nearer to us.

Attend to them therefore, with faith, and you must, surely, if you are indeed Christians, attend with pleasure. Let the most pained heart, though contracted with the most distinguished share of sorrow on this mournful occasion, open itself to these comforts; and let the dejected, weeping, overflowing eye, be raised to meet so glorious a prospect. For, I say, and testify to you, by the word of the Lord, as spoken to us by that illustrious apostle St. Paul, that the pious dead are not perished; but that, *if we believe that Jesus died and rose again*, we have all imaginable reason to depend upon it, that such as *sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him. For the Lord Jesus Christ himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we also*, i. e. those of us Christians, who, in our different generations, are all one body, *who remain alive, shall be caught up together with them, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with*

the Lord. Wherefore, comfort ye one another with these words.

Lift up your heads, O ye mourning Christians! to survey more distinctly this delightful prospect. Lift them up with joy; for your redemption, and that of your now lamented friends, most assuredly draweth nigh.

The grave is continually multiplying its triumphs; and with how many of its affecting trophies are we here surrounded! We die, by the righteous sentence of God against sin, against the first sin of the common founder of our race: *But as by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; and as we are bearing the image of the earthly Adam*, and shall, ere long, like him, return to the dust, *we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*

It does not, surely, *seem an incredible thing* to any of us, *that God should raise the dead.* And, if it seem not incredible, it cannot possibly be thought inconsiderable: especially when we reflect on the glorious manner in which the resurrection of the just is to be accomplished. Our Lord Jesus Christ will see to it, that it be done; yea, he will himself be present at it: it shall be done by his express care, command, and power. *The Lord himself will descend from heaven*, on this account, while all his celestial attendants shall shout forth their joys on the illustrious occasion. And the first thing which he does upon that descent, even before he takes any visible and distinct notice of the saints then alive, will be, to call out of their graves, those that sleep in him: as if he were impatient of that bondage in which their bodies had been detained, and at declared enmity against that destroyer. O *death*, says he, with a majestic indigna-

tion, *I will be thy plague! Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.* I will not leave thee one of my servants to triumph over: however obscure in life, how long soever forgotten in the dust, I will redeem all my Israel, and *not a hoof shall be left behind.* And, oh! let us consider in what forms they shall appear: *He will change these vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his own glorious body, according to that mighty power, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory:* not the least trace of it remaining in all the redeemed world: nothing by which it could be known, that any one of all the redeemed, the thousands and ten thousands of God's Israel, had ever been for one moment under its power. Glorious display of the royalty and magnificence of God's love to his people! that though it be not in itself absolutely necessary to their happiness; yet the meaner part of their nature shall be rescued from the abasements of the grave, and not only recovered, but beautified, invigorated, and adorned!

Nor is this to be merely the triumph of one public and solemn day. It is added, as the crown of all, *so shall we ever be with the Lord!* And let it be remembered, that it is said, not of the apostles alone, or of those, who, like our reverend father, whose remains we now attend, have borne sacred offices in the church, and honoured God in them by distinguished services; but it is said of every true believer, and was intended to include us, on whom the ends of the world are come, who are, so far as our character answers our Christian profession, as dear to Christ, as if we had lived seventeen hundred years ago, and ministered to him, or to his apostles.

And how much is implied in this? We shall be with Christ! Glorious hope, worth dying for! Who that indeed loves him, does not say in his heart, even now, with all these solemn ensigns of death before his eyes, *I desire to depart and to be with Christ: And let the worms destroy this body*, and let the tomb press it down; may but my enlarged spirit soar up to him, though corporeal delights and creature converse were to be known no more! But you will remember, we are to be with the Lord in our complete persons, and in one complete society too: and what is the crown of all, and affords, in a few words, if I may so speak, a kind of infinite delight, *we shall be forever with him.* Nothing shall ever separate us from him; nothing embitter, nothing interrupt, so much as for a moment, the pleasure of our endeared converse with him. And now I will appeal to you, my dear friends, who are most painfully wounded by this sad stroke; and to whom all the tender names of father, and pastor, and friend, are grown sounds of sorrowful memorial, in proportion to the degree in which they were once delightful; yet I will appeal even to you, if these are not good and *comfortable words*, fit for an apostle to write, for God himself to dictate to his mourning children. It appears, from what I have been saying, that it is well with our dear departed friends who sleep in Jesus: they are *sealed up among God's treasures: they enter into peace, they rest in their beds;* and they shall rise from them in the morning of the resurrection, not like Lazarus, with his grave-clothes about him; but dressed in the robes of glory and immortality. And, if this were all that could be said with relation to them, were it not to sound reason, and a lively faith, much, were it not abun-

dantly enough to vindicate the kindness of God's dispensations towards them, though they might seem for a short moment, while they lie in the dust, as under his rebukes? Were it not enough to awaken our congratulations, rather than our condolences? Yet, to increase the pleasure with which we look after these beloved objects, now removed from our sight, we are farther told, and it is by no means to be forgotten, that even now, while *absent from the body*, they are, in an important sense and degree, *present with the Lord;* and so present, that their most intimate converse with him on earth, was, in comparison with this, but absence from him. It is then well with them indeed; and it shall be well with us too, if we are Christians; so soon, so certainly, so entirely well, that I wonder at the weakness of our minds, that they should be so much depressed with this short separation: for these very Scriptures assure us, we shall meet with them again; for they and we being with the Lord, we must be with each other. What a delightful thought is this! when we run over the long catalogue of excellent friends, which we rashly say we have lost, to think, each of us, I also shall be *gathered to my people;* to those whom my heart still owns under that character, with an affection, which death could not cancel, nor these years of absence erase. Nature takes a fond kind of pleasure in the secret thought, that, with regard to some of them, our coffins shall, in a little time, stand by theirs, and our dust be mingled in the same grave. Poor trifling comfort! as if dust could tell where it was, and with what it was mingled. But the Gospel assures us, that if we be *followers of them who through faith and patience do now inherit the promises*, our spirits shall,

ere long, join with theirs, in the services and pleasures of the heavenly world. And how far will this be beyond all that pleasure, with which on earth we have taken sweet counsel together, and gone to the house of God in company! And it also assures us, that, at last, we who have taken our parts in the sad procession of mourners, that conveyed them to this house of darkness and silence, if we indeed believe in Him who is the resurrection and the life, shall also have our place in that bright procession, in which Christ shall lead them on to the gates of glory, in that day, when he will say, in a yet more important sense than he did in the day of his agony, and with his expiring breath, "It is finished—the purposes of my dying love are completely accomplished, and my people are what I always intended they should at last be, and always rejoiced in the views of making them."

Only let us all suffer the word of exhortation, and make it our care, that, seeing we look for such things, we receive *Christ Jesus* the Lord, and walk in him. It is a terrible, but most certain truth, that there are many, who wear the name of Christ now, whom he will at last disown, and *will say to them*, Depart from me, I know you not whence you are. It is most certain, we must be united to Christ by faith, now, and conformed to him in true holiness, or we shall have no *part or lot in this matter.* Let us, therefore, *gird up the loins of our mind*, let us renew our resolution and our watchfulness, and so *hope to the end, for the grace that shall be brought unto us at the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ*, when he shall administer to all his faithful servants an abundant entrance into his heavenly kingdom. Amen.

EXTRACT FROM

THE CHRISTIAN'S DEFENCE

AGAINST THE FEARS OF DEATH,

WRITTEN BY THE LATE REVEREND DIVINE OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCH OF PARIS, CHARLES DRELINCOURT.

Chap. xxiv. Twelfth Consolation.

Some inquire whether we shall know one another in this state of eternal glory and happiness; I mean, whether the subject shall know his prince and king; whether the sheep shall know their pastor, and the pastor his sheep; whether the father shall know his son, and the son the father, the husband his wife, and the wife her husband, and so forth?

Though this question is of the number of such as are more curious than needful to be known; nevertheless, an answer seems to carry with it some kind of comfort and satisfaction. I should judge, that this treatise would not be perfect, if I did not say something on this noble subject: but what I shall say, shall be with the same moderation and reservedness, as I have expressed in answering to the former questions; for although what I shall say, seems to me very plain, and without difficulty, others may have a different opinion, without any prejudice to their salvation. However, I may affirm, for an infallible truth, that the glory of heaven, as well

as grace, shall bring nature to perfection, but shall not destroy it. It shall add to it other excellencies, but it shall not take away those that it hath already. It shall not abolish any of the faculties, but it shall beautify and enrich them with new ornaments. Therefore, consequently, it shall not take away our memory, which is one of the rarest gifts and abilities, of the reasonable soul.

I confess that it said, *that the former things shall be remembered no more, and that they shall come no more into our mind:* but this is to be understood of the evils and calamities of this present life; and we are not to understand the words so, that we shall totally forget all the former evils and miseries, and shall not remember to have suffered them. St. John saith the contrary, when he represents the angel opening the fifth seal; that he saw under the golden altar, which was before the throne of God, the souls of them who had been martyred for the word of God and for the testimony of the truth, crying out, with a loud voice, *How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and revenge our blood upon the inhabitants of the earth?* I confess these words may be understood in a figurative sense, as when God saith to Cain, *The voice of thy brother's blood cries from the earth unto me;* and as St. Paul saith *that the blood of Jesus Christ speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.* However, from hence we may conclude, that the remembrance of the calamities and persecutions which we have endured in this life, is not inconsistent with happiness. This remembrance is so far from prejudicing our felicity, that, on the contrary, it shall increase and enlarge it, and cause us to relish it the more. When the

Prophet saith, *that the former things shall be remembered no more, and they shall never come upon the mind,* he understands that the former evils shall never be felt, and that we shall be forever sheltered from all miseries and misfortunes.

I cannot express this by a nobler and more proper example, than that of Joseph; when he went out of prison to take the government of Egypt, and had strengthened himself by a rich alliance in marriage, he named his eldest son Manasseh, which signifies, *forgetfulness*, or *forgetful; for he said, God hath made me forget all my labour, and my father's house;* although this holy man had not altogether forgotten those things; for he knew afterwards his brethren, and told them of the mischief which they had intended against him, and which God had turned to good: but he spake in this manner, because God had changed his misery and imprisonment into glory and honour. In this sense we are to understand these words, *The former things shall be remembered no more;* because, instead of the evils and miseries which we endure here below, we shall enter into an eternal glory and happiness.

The prophet expounds himself sufficiently in the next words; for when he had said, *The former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind,* he adds, immediately after, *Be glad and rejoice in that which I create.* The Holy Ghost confirms us in this interpretation in another place, in these words: *All tears shall be wiped off from our eyes; there shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, nor pain; but eternal joy and gladness shall be upon our heads.*

Since God intends not to destroy those gifts and abilities, which he had bestowed upon us in this life, much less shall he abolish our knowledge, which is one of the brightest beams of glory. This knowledge shall be so far from diminishing or decaying, that it shall then increase more and more, until it comes to the highest perfection. As the air loseth nothing of its twilight at break of day, when the sun riseth over our heads, but it rather loseth all obscurity and darkness, which the presence of the sun draws away, until it be perfectly enlightened; likewise our understanding shall lose nothing of that light and perfection which it receives now from the breaking of the day of God's grace; but as the Sun of Righteousness riseth upon it more and more in joy and salvation, it shall perfectly lose all darkness and ignorance by degrees, until it be fully enlightened. From hence we may probably conclude, that we shall know all the persons in heaven, whom we have known here on earth. For if the glorified shall remember the wicked, who have tormented them, they must needs remember all believers, who have bestowed on them their alms, and done them good. If it were otherwise, the apostle St. Paul would not tell the Corinthians, *We are your glory, as also you are ours, at the day of the Lord Jesus;* and he would not write thus to the Thessalonians; *What is our hope, our joy, and our crown of glory? Is it not you before the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? Verily, you are our glory and our joy.* Now, if in the state of glory St. Paul should not know the Corinthians and Thessalonians, unto whom he had preached the Gospel, how shall they be his joy, his glory, and his crown, at the coming of the Lord

Jesus? This reasoning seems to me as clear as the sun. Nevertheless, I cannot affirm, that in heaven we shall know again them whom we have known upon earth, by the features of their countenance; for there shall be a wonderful alteration. The faces of all the saints shall be so beautiful, so perfect, and full of light and glory, that the most knowing shall not be able to judge them to be the same whom we have seen upon earth. Some, therefore, fancy that we shall know one another by the assistance of our discourse; but our voice shall then be changed as well as our countenance; and it is doubtful whether we shall discourse of the former things which happened on earth; for our chief employment shall be to behold God's face, and to sing forth his praises. I had rather, therefore, affirm, that we shall know one another by an infused knowledge, by which we shall know all things which are possible to be known, and by the light of that glory with which God shall fill our souls. In short, this knowledge shall proceed from no other principle than that of all the knowledge with which we shall be crowned in that state of glory and perfection.

I am, therefore, more than fully persuaded, that we shall know in heaven our parents and our friends, and generally all the persons whom we have known here below: but we shall also perfectly know them whom we never knew in the world, and never saw with the eyes of the flesh: and though we shall know in heaven all the persons whom we have known on earth, we shall look upon them in another manner, and love them with another affection; for all that we have of the animal and earthly life shall be totally abolished; and, as our knowledge

shall be clear and certain, our love shall be pure and heavenly.

The Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Christ to entangle him with this difficult question, *Master, Moses said, if a man die having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise seed unto his brother. Now, there were with us seven brethren; the first, when he had married a wife, deceased; and having no issue, left his wife unto his brethren; likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh; and, last of all, the woman died also; therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.*

Our Saviour answers not, that this woman shall belong to none of those husbands, because they shall not know her, nor distinguish her from other women; but he replies to them, *Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God; for in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God in heaven.* From hence we may conclude, that although in heaven we shall know one another, we shall have nothing of that carnal love, which we have at present, and which causeth us to put so much difference between one person and another.

If you think seriously upon this, *Christians*, you shall find arguments to answer the vain objections of such as say, that if we come to the knowledge of one another in heaven, that will be able to disturb us of our satisfaction; for as it is a comfort and joy to meet there with our parents and friends, in like manner, it will be a trouble and affliction, not to find there all those whom we have formerly loved. We may form, and retort, the same objection, with more reason, against those who

believe that we shall not know one another in heaven; for we may say, also, that not knowing the persons, we shall not know whether our parents, or our friends, are there; and this is likely to disturb the quiet and satisfaction of our minds; but to argue in this gross manner, is to confound heaven with the earth.

Grief and displeasure can never be admitted in a paradise of joy and perfect happiness. In this glorious condition, our knowledge shall be so clear, our charity so pure, our love to God so fervent, that, as we shall love all things which God shall love, and where his image shall appear; so, it shall not be possible for us to love them whom God shall hate, them who shall bear the marks and characters of the devil.

DISSERTATION

BY RICHARD PRICE, D. D. F. R. S.

ON THE REASONS FOR EXPECTING THAT VIRTUOUS MEN SHALL MEET AFTER DEATH IN A STATE OF HAPPINESS.

No person, who ever makes any serious reflections, can avoid wishing earnestly to be satisfied whether there is a future state: and, if there is, what expectations he ought to entertain with respect to it, and by what means his happiness in it must be secured? There are many arguments which lead us to conclude, in answer to the first of these questions, that we are indeed designed for another state. And there are also many which at the same time prove, that the practice of virtue must be our best security in all events, and the most likely method to secure happiness through every possible future period of our duration. True goodness is the image of the Deity in our souls; and it is not conceivable that it should not recommend us to his particular regard, or that those who practise it should not be always safest and happiest. On the supposition of a future world, nothing offers itself more unavoidably to our thoughts, than the notion that it will be a state in which present inequalities will be set right, and a suitable distinction made between good and bad men. It must, however, be owned, that this subject, as it appears to the eye of unassisted reason, is involved in much darkness.

That in the future state all men shall receive an *adequate retribution*, we may in general *know*; but, had we nothing to guide us besides natural light, we could not go further on any sure grounds, or give a satisfactory reply to several very interesting inquiries. The consideration, particularly of ourselves as *guilty creatures*, would raise doubts in our minds; and these doubts would not be lessened but increased by reflecting, that, under the divine government, happiness is connected with virtue, and punishment with vice. The fact, that virtue will be rewarded, does not by any means determine what such virtue as ours may expect. The virtuous among mankind are to be considered as *penitent sinners;* and what peculiar treatment the cases of such may require, or how far repentance might avail to break the connexion established by the divine laws between sin and misery, would not, I think, be clear to us. Here then the aid of the Christian revelation comes in most seasonably, and gives us the most agreeable information. It furnishes us with a certain proof from fact of a future state, and shows to our senses the *path of life* in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. It *assures* us that repentance will be available to our complete salvation, and that all virtuous men shall be rewarded with a blessed and glorious *immortality*. At the same time, it teaches us to consider this as the effect, not of the ordinary laws of the divine government, but of a particular interposition in our favour, and a love to man in Jesus Christ, which *passes knowledge*.

But it is not my present purpose to insist on these things. The reality of a future state, as it is discoverable by reason, and as it has been confirmed and explain-

ed by the Christian revelation, must be now taken for granted. The design of this discourse is only to offer a few thoughts on one particular question relating to it, which, though not of the *highest*, is yet of *some* consequence. I mean the question, "how far we have reason to expect, that we shall hereafter be restored to an acquaintance with one another, or again see and know one another."

There are probably but few who have felt what it is to be deprived by death of persons they loved, whose thoughts have not been a good deal employed on this point. What, on such occasions, we must desire chiefly to know, is, that our friends are happy; but it is unavoidable to inquire further concerning them with some anxiety, whether we are likely ever to see them again. It would be dismal to think of a departed friend or relative, that "he is gone from us forever, that he exists no more to us." But virtuous men have no reason for any such apprehensions: and one of the unspeakable comforts attending the belief of a future state arises from the hope it gives of having our friendships perpetuated, and being reunited in happier regions to those whom we have loved and honoured here. I am well satisfied that this is a very rational hope; and in order to show that it is so, I shall beg leave to offer the following observations. Let it be considered, first, what effect our future recollection of those who are now dear to us is likely to have upon us. We have great reason to believe, that all the scenes of this life will, in the future life, be presented to our memories, and that we shall then recover the greatest part, if not the whole, of our present consciousness. The Scriptures teach us this in

a very striking manner. It is not therefore to be doubted, but that we shall hereafter have a distinct remembrance of our virtuous friends and kindred: and this remembrance, one would think, must be attended with some revival of particular regard, and have a tendency to draw us to one another as far as it will be possible or proper. It will, I know, be objected to this, that our attachments to relations and friends are derived from instincts which have been planted in us to carry on the purposes of the present state, and which must cease entirely hereafter. This is, undoubtedly, in some degree, true. Every instinctive determination, which respects only the exigencies of the present life, will cease with it. But does it follow from hence, that we are likely hereafter to be left as indifferent to those who are now our relations and friends, as if we had never known them? This would be a very wrong conclusion. The natures of things render it scarcely conceivable that the recollection of those valuable persons with whom we now have connexions (of valuable parents, for example, who had the care of us in our first years, and have brought us up to virtue and happiness), should not, in every future period of our duration, endear their memory to us, and give us a particular *preference* of them, and inclination to seek their society. Many of the distinctions, which we make in our regards between some and others, are derived from reason and necessity; and this seems to be the case in the present instance. We are, perhaps, apt sometimes to carry our notions too far of the difference between what we now are, and what we shall be in the next stage of our being. It would be absurd to suppose that we shall hereafter want all particular desires

and propensities. Benevolence, curiosity, self-love, the desire of honour, and most of our more noble and generous affections, will not decrease, but grow as the perfection of our intellectual nature grows: and even our present social *instincts* may leave effects on our tempers which may produce an everlasting union of souls, and lay the foundation of sentiments and desires which shall never be lost.

But these observations, I am sensible, are not directly to the present purpose. What affords the plainest evidence on this subject is the following consideration. There is great reason to believe that virtuous men, as beings of the same species, who have begun existence in the same circumstances, and been trained up to virtue in the same state of trial and discipline, will be hereafter placed in the same common mansions of felicity. It is groundless and unnatural to imagine, that, after passing through this life, they will be removed to different worlds, or scattered into different regions of the universe. The language of the Scriptures seems plainly and expressly to determine the contrary. They acquaint us, that mankind are to be raised from the dead *together*, and to be judged *together;* and that the righteous, after the general resurrection and judgment, are to be taken together to the same heavenly state, there to live and reign with Christ, and to share in his dignity and happiness. When, in the Epistle to the Hebrews (chap. xii. 22, 23, 24), we are said, in consequence of the clear discoveries made by the Gospel of a future state, to be, as it were, already come to the *city of the living God*, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, and to the spirits of

just men made perfect; it is plainly implied, that we are to join the general assembly of just men and of angels in the realms of light, and to be fixed in the same mansions with them.

The state of future reward is frequently, in the New Testament, described under the notion of a city, that is, a community or society. It is likewise very often called *a kingdom;* the *kingdom of God*, and the *everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* The great end of Christ's coming into the world was to lay the foundation of this kingdom, by saving men from the effects of guilt, delivering them from death, and uniting the virtuous part of them under one perfect and everlasting government in the heavens. It is said of the true disciples of Christ, that, *because he lives, they shall live also;* that they shall hereafter *appear with him in glory;* that he is now *entered for them into heaven* as their forerunner; that he is there *preparing a place for them*, and that he will soon *come again to take them to himself, that where he is, there they may be also, beholding his glory.* This account is utterly inconsistent with the supposition, that those who shall partake of the future reward of virtue are to be dispersed into different parts of the universe, and scarcely leaves us any room to doubt on the present question. For, is it possible that we should be happy hereafter in the same seats of joy, under the same perfect government, and as members of the same heavenly society, and yet remain strangers to one another? Shall we be together with Christ, and yet not with one another? or shall we lose one another in *that multitude which cannot be numbered*, of those who have been rescued by him from destruction, and who will

follow him to his everlasting kingdom? Being in the same happy state with our present virtuous friends and relatives, will they not be accessible to us, and, if accessible, shall we not fly to them, and mingle hearts and souls again? I am very sensible that a great deal of what the Scriptures say of the future state is accommodated to our present imperfect ideas, and must not be understood too literally. But if, in the present instance, it means any thing, it must mean as much as implies what I am pleading for.

In order to give some further evidence on this point, it will not be amiss to desire, that the following passages of Scripture, may be attended to. The Thessalonians, a little before St. Paul wrote his first epistle to them, had, it seems, lost some of their friends by death. In these circumstances, he exhorts them not to *sorrow like others who had no hope*, because they might conclude certainly, from the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that those who had *slept in him, God would hereafter bring with him.* He tells them *by the word of the Lord*, or, as from immediate revelation, that a period was coming when Christ would descend from heaven *with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God;* and when the friends they had lost should be raised from the dead, and, together with themselves, should be *caught up to* meet the Lord in the air, and to live forever with him. 1 Thes. iv. 13, 14, &c. But what I have in view, is more distinctly asserted in the second chapter of this epistle, verse 19. *For what is our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus at his coming?* It is most plainly implied in these words, that the Apostle expected to see and know again his

Thessalonian converts at Christ's second coming. The same remark may be made on his words in 2 Cor. iv. 14: *Knowing that He which raised up* the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus, and present us with you. And also in 2 Cor. i. 14: *As you have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even so ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

Having made these observations to show, that we may with reason entertain the expectation of joining one another hereafter; I shall now beg leave to give myself free scope in imagining and representing the happiness with which it will be attended. It is scarcely possible for any person not to look upon this as one most agreeable circumstance in the future state of felicity. It has a tendency to render the contemplation of another world much more delightful. The hope of it rises up unavoidably in our minds, and has generally, if not always,* accompanied the belief of a future existence. Nor does there appear the least reason why we should hesitate here a moment, or refuse falling in readily with the natural and common apprehensions of mankind. Without dwelling, therefore, any longer on the evidence for this point, let us recollect some of the particular circumstances which will contribute towards rendering the future junction of virtuous men joyful.

One of these circumstances will be the remembrance of their present connections with one another. For *men*

* O præclarum diem, cum ad illud divinum animorum concilium cætumque proficiscar; cumque ex hac turba et colluvione discedam! Proficiscar enim non ad eos solum viros de quibus ante dixi, sed etiam ad Catonem meum, quo nemo vir melior natus est, nemo pietate præstantior, &c.

CICER. de Senectute.

to meet *men*, in the heavenly society; for beings to join one another hereafter, who have begun their existence on the same planet, felt the same fears, and undergone the same discipline, must be the cause of pleasure. What then will it be for *friends* to meet *friends*, and *kindred* to meet *kindred?* What will it be, after obtaining a complete conquest over death, to be restored to those, who are now dear to us as our own souls, and to whose example and instructions we are, perhaps, indebted for the highest blessings? With what delight will the pious parent meet his children, the husband the wife, and the master his family? How will many good men, now of opposite sentiments, rejoice to see one another in bliss, and to find those errors corrected, and those silly prejudices removed, which here keep them at a distance from one another? How will the faithful clergyman rejoice with those of his flock, who have profited by his labours, and whom he has been the means of reclaiming from vice, or improving in goodness? What congratulations, and mutual welcomings, may we suppose, will then take place, between all virtuous friends? How agreeable will it be, to review together the conversations which they have had with one another in this state of darkness, and to recollect and compare the scenes they now pass through, the doubts that now perplex them, the different parts they now act, and the different temptations and trials with which they struggle? Are such views and reflections all visionary? Surely they are not. If there is, indeed, to be that future junction of the worthy among mankind, which I have pleaded for, they are sufficiently warranted, and must offer themselves to every considerate mind.

Another circumstance, which will contribute to the joy we shall have in meeting one another hereafter, will

be our reflection on the common danger we shall have escaped. We are told, in the plainest terms, by the mouth of divine wisdom, that all who do wickedly, shall be doomed to *that everlasting fire*,* which was prepa-

* Matthew, xxv. 41.—*Then shall he say to them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* It has been observed as remarkable, in the passage from which these words are taken, that, whereas the *kingdom* into which the righteous are to be advanced, is said to have been prepared for them, from before the foundation of the world; the *everlasting fire*, on the contrary, into which the wicked are to be consigned, is said to have been prepared, not for them, but for the *devil and his angels*. This seems to intimate to us, that the devil and his angels were the first transgressors, who have been the means of involving mankind in guilt and distress. I cannot forbear adding, with respect to the representation which the Scriptures often make of the future state of punishment, as an *unquenchable and everlasting fire*, into which the wicked are to be cast; that, probably, the reasons of it may be—First, The propriety of an inextinguishable fire, which consumes whatever is thrown into it, to represent, in a manner striking to the imagination, the future everlasting rejection and extermination of all that work iniquity.—Secondly, Learned men have observed, that there is in this representation, an allusion to the continual fires in the valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem, where, in idolatrous times, innumerable children had been burnt alive to Moloch; and where, in the times of our Saviour, there was a fire always burning, to consume the filth of the city, and the carcasses of animals. This valley was considered by the Jews, for this reason, as a place so unclean and horrible, that it was natural to make use of it as an emblem of the state of future punishment. It is well known, that the original words rendered by the translators of the New Testament, *hell-fire*, are the fire of Gehenna, or the fire of the valley of Hinnom. It was, therefore, from this valley, that the regions of punishment came to be called by the ancient Jews Gehenna, the sign or emblem being made to stand for that which it was supposed to resemble.

red for the devil and his angels; and that broad is the way, and wide the gate, that leadeth to destruction; and that many there be who go in thereat. Every person, therefore, who shall hereafter attain to happiness, will be one escaped from great danger. And can it be imagined, that the remembrance of this will have no tendency to enhance the satisfaction attending the future junction of good men? Will it not be agreeable to see, that, amidst the dismal wreck, our friends have been preserved; and that they are safe landed, after being tossed on the sea of this world, and running numberless risks of being cast away? Will it not give us the highest pleasure to meet among the blessed, those persons for whom, perhaps, we have often sighed and trembled; or to find, that, instead of being numbered among the lost and miserable, our earnest wishes for them have been answered, that they have acquitted themselves well in life, and *chosen that good part, which will never be taken from them?*

Thirdly, It may be proper, on this occasion, to think of the place where we shall hereafter join our virtuous friends. We shall meet them in the realms of light; *in that city* which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God; in the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* We shall see them again in those *new heavens, and that new earth†, wherein dwelleth righteousness, into which, nothing that defileth, or that loveth or maketh a lie, shall be admitted‡;* where *all tears will be wiped away from our eyes, and pain, and death, and sorrow, shall be known no more§;* where God will show us his most glorious face, and order, peace, and love, reign in full perfection for ever.

* Heb. x. 10.
† 2 Peter, iii. 13.
‡ Rev. xxi. 27.
§ Rev. xxi. 4.

But one of the particulars, that most requires our notice here, is, that our friends will then have lost their present weaknesses; they will not then be such frail and helpless beings as we now see them. They will not be liable to be ensnared by temptations, or ruffled by unreasonable passions. They will not be hasty in their judgments, capricious in their tempers, or narrow in their opinions. Every wrong bias will be taken from their wills, and the imperfections, which now render them less amiable, will be removed. Our hearts shall never more ache for their troubles, or feel anguish on their account. They will be past all storms, cured of all follies, and eased of all pains. They will appear in finished dignity and honour, after the education and discipline of this world, and be endowed with every excellence which we can wish them to have. What pleasure will it give to meet them in these circumstances? How delightful will be our intercourse with them, when they, together with ourselves, shall be thus changed and improved?

Once more. In the future world, there will be no such painful separations from our friends, as we now suffer. It can scarcely be said, that we have, in this life, more than just time enough to begin friendships, and to feel the pangs of sorrow that attend the dissolution of them. But, in the Heavenly State, we shall feel no sorrows of this kind. Our friends will be immortal. Our happiness in them will be liable to no abatements from the sad apprehension of being soon parted from them, and seeing them sink under decay and sickness. We shall never be witnesses to any such shocking scenes as their expiring agonies. The cruel hand of death will not be able there to reach them, and to tear them from our em-

braces.* They will flourish in eternal health and vigour, and be with us *forever with the Lord.* Such are the circumstances that, we may imagine, will contribute to the joy attending the future junction of virtuous men in the heavenly state. I cannot help adding the following reflections.

First,—What I have been saying, has a tendency to increase our satisfaction in our friends. The prospect, in general, of a future state, must have a most friendly influence on our present enjoyments. What, indeed, is human life without such a prospect? What darkness rests upon it; when we consider it as no more than a passing shadow, *which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away;* or as a short period of tumultuous bustle and uncertain happiness, diminished by many vexations, with an infinite blank before and behind it? Such a view of life deprives its pleasures of their relish. It is enough to chill all our thoughts, and to break every spring of noble action within us. But if, in reality, this life is only an *introduction* to a better life, or the feeble *infancy* of an existence that shall never end, it appears with unspeakable dignity; it has an infinitely important end and meaning; all its enjoyments receive an addi-

* Who would not (says Socrates, in his Apology) part with a great deal to purchase a meeting with Orpheus, Hesiod, Homer, &c.? If it be true that this is to be the consequence of death, I would even be glad to die often. What pleasure will it give, to live with Palamedes and others, who suffered unjustly, and to compare my fate with theirs? What an inconceivable happiness will it be, to converse, in another world, with Sisyphus, Ulysses, &c. especially as those who inhabit that world, shall die no more? Και ηδη τον λοιπον χρονον αθανατοι εισιν; ειπερ γε τα λεγομενα αληθη εστιν. Socrat. Apol. apud Plat.

tional relish, and the face of nature will shine with greater beauty and lustre. In particular, the consideration of the circumstance relating to our future existence, on which I have been insisting, will communicate new joy to all our present *friendships*.

The reflection on our friends, as heirs with us of the same blessed immortality, as persons whom we shall meet in the regions of heavenly bliss, and live with forever, must cheer our minds in all our intercourse with them, and cause us to look upon them with the highest affection and delight.

But, to consider them as only beings of a day, who are to perish in death, we know not how soon; how uncomfortable is this! What a damp must it throw over our friendships! How difficult must it be, for persons, who have any tender feelings, to think, without distress, of agreeable connections, which they see will end in a speedy and final separation; or, of valuable friends, all whose valuable qualities are, in a little while, to be wholly extinguished, and whom they are just going to lose forever! The more agreeable the connections are, the more distress must such apprehensions create: and the more valuable our friends, the greater reason will there be for pain. But, suppose what has been asserted in this discourse; suppose that our present connections are to be renewed hereafter, that we are again to see those valuable persons, who are gone before us from hence; or that the friendships which now take place between worthy men, are only the beginning of an union of minds, that will be continued and perfected in the heavens: suppose this, I say, and all will be triumph. We shall have abundant encouragement to cultivate friend-

ship. The view of death will have a tendency to increase, rather than damp the pleasures attending it. The addition of a good friend or relative, will be the addition of one, who will share with us in the joys of immortality, who will enter with us into the city of the *living God*, and be our everlasting companion in glory.

It is natural to remark further on this occasion, how important it is that we cultivate only virtuous friendships. Cicero has observed, with the highest reason, that all friendship ought to be founded in virtue. There is, certainly, nothing else that can make it safe, lasting, and happy. It is its cement, life, joy, and crown. There is no other permanent foundation of love, or bond of union between reasonable beings. But there is nothing much better fitted to show the importance of virtue in friendship, than the subject now under consideration. How shocking must it be to believe, that our dearest intimate is one, whom we cannot expect to see hereafter in bliss, one who wants the love of God, and who is hastening fast to everlasting punishment? How can any person think of having in his bosom an enemy to the order of the world, and a child of perdition and ruin? With what pain must an attentive person look upon such a friend, and what concern must he feel for him? On this account, were irreligious friends to allow themselves time enough for reflection, they would, necessarily, be the causes of the greatest trouble to one another. Did they duly attend to their own circumstances, the danger they are in, the precariousness of life and the nearness of the time when they shall be separated, never again to meet, except in that world, where joy is never known, and hope never comes; did they, I say, proper-

ly, attend to these things, they would, surely, be incapable of bearing one another; their love would be turned into anguish and their friendship into horror. Let us then avoid, as much as we well can, becoming intimately connected with any, except the virtuous and worthy. Let us resolve to cultivate friendship only with those, whom we may hope to be happy with *forever.*

In the next place: It is a very obvious observation on the present subject, that it affords the best consolation in a time of grief for the death of friends. It is, I think, very credible that death is an event, for which, such creatures as we are, might not at first be designed. It looks like a break in our existence, attended with such circumstances, as may well incline us to believe, that it is a *calamity* in which we have been involved, rather than a *method of transition* from one state of existence to another, originally appointed by our Creator, and common under his government. This, the Scriptures declare plainly to be the real fact. But then, it should be remembered, that the same Scriptures inform us further, that we have a great Deliverer, who came into the world, *that we might have life;* and who by death has destroyed death*, and *him who had the power of death*, and *obtained for us everlasting redemption.*

The dark and dreary grave, therefore, has now nothing in it that should make it appear terrible. We have, as Christians, something better to support us under the anguish produced by the death of friends, than the cold alternative of the ancient philosophers; that either they are happy, or returned to the state they were in before

* John, x. 10.--Heb. ii. 14. ix. 12.

they were born. We may exult in the expectation of finding them again, and renewing our friendship with them in a better country. The worst that death can do, is to cause a short interruption in our intercourse with them; or to remove them from our sight for a moment: we shall soon follow them, be raised up with them to a new life, and take possession with them of an *inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth nat away.** Such are the hopes which the blessed Gospel gives; and well may they elevate our minds above these scenes of mortality, dry up our tears in every season of sorrow, and inspire us always *with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*† The whole effect which the inroads made by death among our friends, should have upon us, is to render us more diligent in religious virtue, and to quicken us to greater zeal in endeavouring to secure a meeting with them and with all worthy men hereafter. It should belong only to those, to be inconsolable on such occasions, whose regards are confined to this world, and who have no hope.

Once more: I would observe, that the expectation which virtuous friends have of being completely happy together hereafter, furnishes them with a very important direction for regulating their present behaviour to one another. They should maintain in their whole deportment, that purity and dignity which become so high an expectation. They should endeavour, by their examples and admonitions, to excite in one another an earnest ardour to excel in every worthy quality, and watch continually over one another, lest, through the in-

* 1 Peter, i. 3, 4. † 1 Peter, i. 8.

dulgence of any failures, they should lose future bliss, and come to be eternally separated from one another. Their views ought to be directed always to the heavenly state, and their whole concern should be, so to live and converse together, as to secure a joyful meeting there.

The pleasures of society and friendship are some of the greatest we are capable of. It is not credible, that there is any created intelligence that enjoys a happiness which is independent of all social correspondencies and connexions. A state wholly solitary must want many of the principal sources of bliss. It appears dark and desolate, and cannot admit of the exertion of some of the noblest powers of reasonable beings. Friendship, therefore, in all probability, is everlasting and universal in the rational creation, and will make a part of our happiness in every future period of our existence. The consideration of this has a tendency to raise our ideas of its value, and should engage us to be anxious about so acting in this relation now, and so improving its blessings, as that we may go hence properly qualified for the more noble and exalted friendships of another world. How noble and exalted these will be, it cannot enter into our hearts to conceive. It is impossible to look forwards to them with lively faith and attention, without feeling an alacrity and elevation of mind, not to be produced by any other cause. Let us, before we dismiss this subject, fix our thoughts here a moment, and recollect some of the observations which have been made. It gives us, in the present life, a pleasure of the highest kind, to converse with wise and worthy men, amidst all our present imperfections, and notwithstanding the certain prospect of being in a little while parted by death. What then

will it be to join the general assembly of the great and good in the heavens; and to be restored there to those who are now the desire of our eyes, the joy of our hearts; to converse with them when freed from every weakness and adorned with every amiable quality, and to make a part of the glorious company of Christ's faithful followers at his second coming? What will it be, not only to have our present friendships thus perpetuated, but to commence new ones with superior beings; to live and reign with the Saviour of sinful mortals, and to be forever improving, with all the virtuous part of the creation, under the eye and care of the Almighty?

We are now frail, feeble, ignorant, and helpless; we think, we speak, and act, like children; but, in a little time, we shall be advanced to a more perfect state, and receive our complete consummation, in soul and body, in everlasting glory. Soon the darkness of this world will vanish; every weight will be removed from our aspiring minds, our highest faculties gain full scope for exertion, and unclouded, endless day dawn upon us. We shall be brought to *the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant, and to God, the Judge of all.*

We have latent powers which it may be the business of eternity to evolve. We are capable of an infinite variety of agreeable perceptions and sensations, which are now as incomprehensible to us, as the enjoyments of a grown man are to an infant in the womb. Our present existence is but the first step of an ascent in dignity and bliss, which will never come to an end. How amazing

and ecstatic this prospect! What shall we some time or other be? But let us take care to remember the truth, which, in this discourse, I have all along kept in sight. Let us not forget, that none but persons of righteous lives and characters have reason to rejoice in these views. The workers of iniquity will not *rise*, but *sink*. They will be driven from the society of virtuous beings. They will lose infinite happiness, and be cast away forever. They are nuisances in the creation, and unfit to be preserved; or, according to our Lord's representation, *the tares among the wheat; and when the time of harvest shall come, he will say to his reapers, Gather together first the tares, and bind them in bundles, and burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn.** Would you, then, make sure of the happiness I have been representing—would you, when every earthly connexion is broken, obtain admission into a better world, and an union with those you love in the habitations of the just—would you be able, hereafter, to join your voice to the voices of millions, who, after the long silence of the grave, will break forth into St. Paul's song of triumph, *O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? Blessed be God, who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ*—would you rise to a *place on Christ's throne*, or see the time when you shall look down upon archangels—then avoid vice; practise true religion; strive to get above defiling passions, and to grow in every excellent disposition. On this, all depends. This is the only preparation for bliss, and the only way to favour under the divine government. All anxiety, except about

* Mathew, xiii. 30.

this, every human being will soon know to be folly unspeakable. Remember, that if there is such a state of future existence as has been described, there is nothing worth a single thought, compared with making provision for it; and that conscious of your own dignity, it becomes you to look continually above every thing mortal, and to spurn with disdain at those pleasures, profits, and honours, on which the *children of this world* set their hearts. Blessed are they who keep the commandments of God, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.* He that overcometh shall inherit all things. But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

* Rev. xxii. 14; xxi. 7, 8.

A SERMON,

BY THE REV. THOMAS GISBORNE, M. A.

ON THE HAPPINESS ATTENDANT ON THE PATHS OF RELIGION.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness; and all her paths are peace.
Prov. iii. 17.

Among the internal demonstrations of the truth of Christianity, the excellence of the appropriate lessons respectively addressed in the Sacred Writings to different descriptions of men holds a distinguished place. To the wicked the Scripture speaks the language of indignation, tempered with offers of mercy. To the penitent it promises forgiveness. The righteous it animates with triumphant hope. To the ignorant, it holds forth instruction; to the unwary, caution; to the presumptuous, humility; to the feeble-minded, support; to the wavering, perseverance; to the dispirited, encouragement; to the afflicted, consolation. Who but that Power, who discerns every variety of the human disposition, every winding of the human heart; could have been the author of a religion thus provided with a remedy for every corruption, a defence under every weakness? Who but that Power, whose love to fallen man was so immeasurably great, that he gave his Son to die for all mankind upon the cross; to die, that all who believe in him might be redeemed from the penalty of guilt, and might attain

everlasting life: who but that Father of mercies and God of all comfort would have so graciously directed by the superintendance of his Spirit the sacred writers of the Bible, that no individual of the human race, to whom his revealed word shall be faithfully made known, can perish for want of knowledge; nor can fail of discovering, as the reward of humble, and diligent, and devout inquiry, the doctrine, the admonition, the reproof, the exhortation, the promise, or the counsel, precisely adapted to the situation in which he stands?

The passage of Scripture, which we now have before us, breathes the voice of the most cheering encouragement. In several of the preceding verses Solomon had drawn a description of religion under the appellation of wisdom. Religion is the only true wisdom: and sin is the most flagrant kind of folly. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.* To the cultivation of that true wisdom the wise king invites his son, by the assurance that all things which can be desired are not to be compared unto her; that she is a tree of life to them that lay hold on her; that her ways are ways of pleasantness, and that all her paths are peace. The invitation, and the motives on which it is grounded, belong to us, even to all men. To the paths of religion every man is called. And the solemn declaration, that they are ways of pleasantness and peace is at once an exhortation to the wicked, to fly to those tracks in which blessedness resides; and to the righteous, to persevere in those courses in which they have already found rest to their souls.

I propose in the first place to evince the truth of this declaration; and afterwards to apply it for the instruc-

tion and improvement of those who have not yet chosen the ways of religion, and of those who are walking in her paths.

I. The religious man is delivered, and delivered by religion, from those causes of solicitude, terror, and affliction, which are the principal sources of the miseries of mankind. And he experiences helps and consolation, to which in proportion as men are not religious, they are strangers.

These important truths will appear manifest, if unfolded by a consideration, in detail, of some of the anxieties and fears, which religion, and religion only, removes; and of the corresponding assistances and comforts, which religion, and religion only, bestows.

1. The most grievous of all the distresses which weigh down the heart of man, is the sense of unpardoned guilt. The most terrible of all the apprehensions which shake the soul, is the dread of the vengeance of an offended God. From this distress, from this apprehension, the religious man is set free. He looks up to God, through Christ, as to a reconciled Father, *Being justified by faith, he has peace with God through our Lord Jesus.** He no longer feels the intolerable recollection of former sins depressing him into anguish and despair: but in the very moments when he looks back upon them with the profoundest self-abasement, he beholds them washed away by the blood of *the Lamb of God*, who was sacrificed for the transgressions of the whole world. In that sacrifice he has learned that he has himself an interest: in that sacrifice he finds pardon and peace. He is no longer *alien-*

* Rom. v. i.

ated from God, at enmity with the almighty Sovereign of earth and heaven. He contemplates his Creator with filial affection; delights in his holiness; loves his commandments. He hears as addressed to himself the voice of God speaking in his revealed word: *Thy sins and thine iniquities I remember no more. I will be to thee a Father; and thou shalt be to me a son. Be thou faithful unto death; and I will give thee a crown of life.** The burden is removed from his soul; and he goeth on his way rejoicing. He feels springing up within his breast the genuine consolations of the Gospel. He feels that *the fruit of the Spirit is joy and peace.* He is *filled with all joy and peace in believing.*† Every token of grateful obedience which he is enabled to render to his Redeemer, overspreads his heart with gladness. Every devout aspiration which he directs to the throne of grace, diffuses holy peace over his soul. He is a subject of *the Prince of peace*, an heir of God through Christ, reconciled unto the Father by the blood of the Son. As he advances in religion, he advances in happiness. He turns his eye backward on the days, when he was comparatively unacquainted with religion; and exclaims in the language of Holy Writ; *I had heard of her by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth her.*‡ *Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.*

2. The religious man is delivered from immoderate fear of falling away from God under future temptations. He knows that even unto the bed of death his faith and his obedience will be exercised by temptation. He

* Heb. viii. 12. 2 Cor. vi. 18. Rev. ii. 10.
† Gal. v. 22. Rom. xv. 13. ‡ Job, xlii. 5.

knows his own weakness, his own corruption. He knows that, if he holds not fast that which he hath, another shall take his crown. He knows that, if he abandons his Saviour, his name shall be blotted out of the book of life.* He knows, for his God hath pronounced the warning, that he is to *pass the time of his sojourning here in fear; that happy is the man that feareth always.*† He fears for himself. But his fear is not an overwhelming terror. It is a fear which excludes all dependance on his own strength. It is a fear which produces humility, caution, vigilance, meditation, and prayer. But it is not a fear which brings anguish: it is not a fear which urges to despondence. Why? Because he looks up to Him who is mighty to save; to Him who has promised to save all who fly to him for succour. He looks to the Lord his sanctifier; to the covenanted assistance of the spirit of God. That he may obtain support from above, he neglects not the exertions which the Scripture, his unerring rule, pronounces to be necessary on his part. While he prays that God would not lead him into temptation, he abstains from needlessly plunging himself into scenes of trial. While he solicits from the bounty of God the *true riches*, he neglects not the *talent* with which he is entrusted. He is circumspect, watchful, sober-minded. He considers his ways, that he may turn aside his foot from evil. He is zealous to employ to the uttermost the strength which he has received, in promoting the glory of the Giver. Hence he applies with devout confidence to Him, who has engaged to bestow his Holy Spirit on all that ask Him. He lifts up his heart to God in the inspired language of the Psalmist:

*Rev. iii. 5, 11. † 1 Pet. i. 17. Prov. xxviii. 14.

*Lord! I am thy servant: forsake not the work of thine own hand. Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation! Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit.** In the words of inspiration he reads the answer of his God: *My grace is sufficient for thee. I am with thee always.* I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, *Because thou fearest me, I have hearkened and heard it: and thou shalt be mine; and I will spare thee as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.**

3. The religious man is delivered from corroding anxieties as to the events which may befall him during the residue of his life. He has set his affections on things above, not on things on the earth. His treasure is in heaven: and there also is his heart. Having food and raiment, he is therewith content. On earth he is but a sojourner and a pilgrim: and he perceives that it needs not to be an object of serious concern whether the road along which he travels be somewhat more or less smooth, whether he meets with somewhat more or fewer accommodations on his journey. He shall soon reach the end, his everlasting home, his everlasting rest. To that home, to that rest, he steadily looks forward, and repines not at the difficulties of the way. And why should he repine? What if he be overtaken by calamity? What if he be laid on the bed of sickness? Cannot Omnipotence remove calamity? Cannot Omnipotence restore health?

* Psalm xxvii. 9. li. 11. 12, cxxxviii. 8.

† 2 Cor. xii. 9. Matth. xxviii. 20. Heb. xiii. 5. Mal. iii. 16, 17. 2 Tim. ii. 1.

*The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him.** But what if his affliction be continued? Knoweth he not that all things shall work together for good in the end to them who love God? He feels that he can humbly say with Peter, *Lord! thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee.* He feels that he loves God, and is comforted. But what if he should experience the severest, the least retrievable, of worldly deprivations; the loss of dear and pious friends? Has God provided no balm for that wound? Cannot God provide for him other friends, who in some measure, if not entirely, may fill the void in his heart which death has made? And the pious friends whom he has lost, has he lost them forever? He has lost them but for a moment. They are but gone a little before him. They are waiting to welcome his arrival in the kingdom of their Redeemer, where they shall meet in bliss unspeakable, never to part again. In the most trying hour, under dispensations the most afflictive, he remembers, and experiences, the consoling influence of the Spirit of God. He finds him to be, what he was announced to be, the true *Comforter*. From that Spirit he receives unfailing supplies of supporting and strengthening grace. The fruits of that Spirit he still finds to be *joy and peace*. He hears the words of his Saviour; *Let not your heart be troubled:* and reposes with unclouded serenity on his love. His patient endurance becomes thankful acquiescence: and his holy calmness is at times exalted to joy *unspeakable, and full of glory.*

* 2 Chron. xvi. 9.

4. The religious man is delivered from the fear of the last enemy, Death. *Through fear of Death*, ungodly men *are all their lifetime subject to bondage.** From this thraldom, thraldom which renders life itself a burden, the servant of God has been rescued. His fetters are broken. Before him Death stands disarmed of his terrors. What though the approach of death excites tender solicitude for those whom the dying man leaves behind? He knows that the power, who has protected him, is able also to protect them. He listens to the promise of the Lord: *Leave thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive: and let thy widow trust in me.*† He listens; and anxiety is at an end. What though the approach of Death be accompanied with temporary alarms at the prospect of standing before his Maker? The heart of the Christian is soon reestablished. He remembers that he is to stand before his Maker, not in his own righteousness, but justified through the righteousness of his Redeemer. He knows that he shall be *complete in Christ:* that he shall thus be *without fault before the throne of God.*‡ Sin, the sting of Death, is taken away. The gloom which overhangs the valley of the shadow of Death becomes the twilight of an eternal morning. The grave is the gate of heaven. The moment which extinguishes mortal existence is the commencement of everlasting life. He longs to bid adieu to pain and sorrow: he longs to be united to the glorified spirits of the just whom he loved on earth, to join the innumerable company of saints and angels; to behold his Redeemer face to face; to be blessed in the presence of his God. It is thus that the righteous fall asleep.

* Heb. ii. 15. † Jer. xlix. 11. ‡ Col. ii. 10. Rev. xiv. 5.

5. There yet remain various circumstances, which attend the religious man in the ordinary course of his life, and contribute no small accessions to the daily amount of his happiness. By the integrity and the kindness of his conduct, for integrity and kindness are among the genuine fruits of true religion; he is on many occasions placed beyond the reach of those who may be desirous of injuring him. *Who is he that will harm you;* who is he that under common events will be able to bring you into trouble, *if ye be followers of that which is good?* In domestic life has not the religious man, and he alone, grounds for expecting permanent harmony and affection? Will not his friends, selected from among those who love their God, be found tender and faithful? Will not his intercourse with them be equally a source of improvement and of delight? Will not the general temper of his mind be cheerful serenity? Free from the dominion of ambition, of avarice, of anger, and of other disorderly passions, he descends quietly and contentedly along the stream of life; little molested by many of the usual causes of uneasiness, and at a distance from many of the ordinary occasions of danger. From the common bounties of Providence he derives higher satisfaction than other men. And he has continual experience of blessings, which the wicked neither relish nor perceive. The interchange of day and night, the vicissitudes of revolving seasons, return to him with renovated joy. They present to his view the Author of all things, the Supreme Object of his gratitude and love. The contemplation of the works of God, meditation on the wonders of redemption, recollection of past mercies, devout anticipations of fu-

ture glory: these are subjects which occupy and expand his heart, and cause it to overflow with that peace of God, which passeth human understanding. *Great peace have they who love thy law, O Lord. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Godliness has the promise of the life which now is, as well as of that which is to come.* The ways of religion are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.*

II. I proceed to apply the instruction, which may be drawn from the text, to persons of three different descriptions.

1. I would first address those who are decidedly wicked.

If the ways of religion are ways of pleasantness and peace; the opposite paths of ungodliness must be paths of misery. What saith the Scripture? *The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest; whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.*† Do you doubt the truth of this declaration of the Omniscient? Consider the unrighteous. Do such men appear to you to be happy? Are the tempers of their minds, are their views, their plans, their secret reflections, such as are likely to give birth to inward tranquillity and comfort? If they seem to enjoy peace, is it not the tranquillity of folly, the security of ignorance, the stupor of unconcern, the deadness of a conscience past feeling, the judicial infatuation of a reprobate mind? Is it not the peace of a mariner who knows not that a plank has started in the bottom of his vessel? Is it not the peace of a traveller who thinks not that the bridge on which he

* Psalm cxix. 165. Isaiah, xxvi. 3. 1 Tim. iv. 8.
† Isaiah, lvii. 20, 21.

crosses the gulf is about to sink from beneath his feet? Is it not the peace of a criminal, who foresees not that the hand of justice waits but for the close of day to arrest him in his bed, to hurry him to trial and execution? Is the conduct of the wicked such as is adapted to produce happiness to themselves? Does their wickedness render their families happy? Does it recommend them to you as confidential associates, as desirable friends? If you wish for additional information, appeal to the wicked man himself. But appeal to him at a moment, when he will speak the truth. Appeal to him on his death-bed. Inquire of him whether his life has been a happy life. Inquire whether from his own experience he would counsel thee to choose the path of guilt as the road to peace. And what if he profess that he has been happy? Examine and judge, whether he can have been a happy man. Stand thou on the one hand, while his conscience beholds the king of terrors on the other. Ask thyself whether the possession of the whole world would bribe thee to take to thyself his past life with all its pleasures coupled with his present situation and all its horrors. Whoever thou art who hast hitherto walked in the ways of sin and misery; hear that voice, which still invites thee to repentance, pardon, holiness, and happiness. Hear the voice of thy Saviour, who still waiteth to be gracious. *Acquaint thyself with him, and be at peace.**

2. In the next place let me request the attention of those persons, who are wavering between the paths of religion and the paths of guilt.

* Job, xxii. 21.

What is the result of your experience? Do you find peace in your present courses? The supposition is impossible. You are travelling by turns two contrary roads. In both of them you cannot be happy. If you find peace in one of them; you must necessarily find disquiet in the other. What is the fact? You find peace in neither. You have rather too strong a sense of religion to be comfortable in the practice of iniquity. And you have by far too weak a sense of religion, to enjoy the comforts which belong to the righteous. You are too much afraid of God to be able without anxiety to provoke him. And you love him too little to enjoy unmixed delight in obeying him. *How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.** If you would find peace, it is evident that you must relinquish one of those paths, between which you have hitherto been hesitating. You must choose and abide by the one, or the other. What is your choice? In which of the two paths have you hitherto found the nearest approach to peace of mind? To judge by past transactions, do you conclude that you shall attain the fairer prospect of happiness by forsaking sin, and devoting yourself wholly to God; or by renouncing religion, and abandoning yourself altogether unto wickedness? If you would act consistently, if you would pursue peace with any reasonable chance of success; you must adopt one of those methods. Determine, therefore, whether you deem it more desirable to have God for your friend, or for your enemy: to apply to yourself the promises, or the threatenings of his word: to behold

* 1 Kings, xviii. 21.

in Christ Jesus the Saviour of the penitent or the avenger of unrighteousness: to enjoy, or to reject the consoling influence of the Spirit of grace: to look forward to the day of judgment with triumphant hope, or with despairing terror. Through the long-suffering of your merciful Father the choice is yet in your power. Choose with an humble and a steadfast heart the service of God in Christ; *and the God of peace shall sanctify you wholly.* You shall be *filled with all joy and peace in believing.* You shall confess that *to be spiritually-minded is life and peace.**

3. Let me now speak to those, who are truly religious.

Perhaps you have been ready to exclaim, that you have been, more or less, disappointed in your expectations: that you have not found in the course of your full endeavours after faith and holiness the uniform and full satisfaction, for which the declarations of the Scriptures had encouraged you to hope: and that, since the promises of God can never fail, you are in consequence depressed with alarming apprehensions that you have been deceiving your own hearts, and are not in the number of the righteous. Now God forbid that his ministers should affirm, that all persons who have not experienced in religion the complete consolation, which it holds forth to his servants, are therefore not religious. The promises of God never fail. But there may exist some circumstance, which has hitherto prevented you, which may even now prevent you, from reaping due benefit from them. Sometimes bodily maladies prey upon the spirits; and create a melancholy, which is a dis-

* 1 Thes. v. 23. Rom. xv. 13. viii. 6.

ease. In this situation, and possibly it may have been or may now be, the situation of some whom I address, the accomplishment of the promises of God is suspended. For wise purposes known unto himself, comfort and peace are at present withheld. But to those who persevere in devout and patient obedience they are, in the ordinary course of Providence, extended at last. Sometimes also, persons, who are earnest in their desires and efforts to be religious, adopt erroneous opinions on some branches of religion. Perhaps, unable, in common with the rest of mankind, metaphysically to delineate the *mode*, in which the foreknowledge of God may be consistent with the contingent salvation of man, they virtually pronounce them irreconcilable: and having thus adventured to limit the power of Omnipotence, they conceive that their lot has been absolutely and irrevocably preordained from everlasting; that by the sovereign and unconditional decree of the Almighty they have been created purposely to be placed, according to his fiat, in the realms of eternal bliss, or to be consigned to never-ending wo; and that until death shall remove the veil which conceals their appointed mansion, it must ever remain a doubt, a doubt loaded with torture and dismay, whether to them heaven be not inaccessible, and hell inevitable. Perhaps they no less erroneously conclude that the attainment of justifying faith, and the conversion of the heart by the regenerating operation of the Holy Spirit, are events distinctly manifested to the believer by inward and supernatural impressions: and not having experienced in their own bosoms the sensible tokens of acceptance, they infer that they are unredeemed from the penal consequences of guilt, unsanctified by the purifying influence of

divine grace, aliens from God, children of damnation. Sometimes men of piety restrict themselves to partial views of religion. Perhaps they nearly confine their meditation to their own guilt; without sufficiently raising their thoughts to the atonement and the intercession of Christ. Perhaps they dwell almost exclusively on their own weakness and corruption: and thus think too little of the sanctifying, the universal, and the all-subduing aid of the Holy Ghost. Perhaps they fix their minds so intently on doctrines, as to pay too little regard to the regulation of their hearts: or, while they are anxious in the performance of good works, are too little careful to render them as fruits of faith. Now so far as you misapprehend the nature of religion, you will necessarily fall short of its genuine comforts. But it is well if the failure of complete consolation in the ways of religion, of which you complain, be not owing to another and a more general cause. It is well if it be not owing to this circumstance, that you are not *entirely* religious. You can possess the comforts of religion only *in proportion* as you are religious. If evil inclinations still resume at intervals their original dominion over your heart; if the remains of unsubdued passions agitate your breast; they will entail their natural consequences, solicitude and anguish. Charge not then your want of inward peace on religion: charge it on your own deficiency in religion. In proportion as you are sinful you must expect the wages of sin. Be *thoroughly* religious, that you may have *perfect* peace.

*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.** Shall not those in every congregation, who are indeed

* Isaiah, xl. 1.

the people of God, be exhorted humbly to take unto themselves, while they continue steadfast in faith and holiness, the consolations which their God has provided for them? *Fear not ye*, who have set your hearts on salvation through Christ. *Fear not ye: for ye seek Jesus who was crucified.* Fear not ye: for your Redeemer liveth. Fear not ye: for ye have an Almighty Protector. Fear not ye: for he hath promised to strengthen you with might adequate to your trials. Fear not ye: for ye are under the guidance of infinite wisdom, goodness, and love. Fight the good fight of faith. You shall have serenity during the conflict, and victory at the close. *Cast all your care on Him, who careth for you.* Rejoice in the word of God; *comfort yourselves in the word of the Lord.* Verily ye shall know, that *the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.**

* Isaiah, xxxii. 17.

A SERMON,

BY PHILIP DODDRIDGE, D. D.

SUBMISSION TO DIVINE PROVIDENCE, ON THE DEATH OF CHILDREN.

PREFACE.

The discourse which I now offer to the public was drawn up on a very sorrowful occasion; the death of a most desirable child, who was formed in such a correspondence to my own relish and temper, as to be able to give me a degree of delight, and consequently of distress, which I did not before think it possible I could have received from a little creature who had not quite completed her fifth year.

Since the sermon was preached, it has pleased God to make the like breaches in the families of several of my friends; and, with regard to some of them, the affliction hath been attended with circumstances of yet sorer aggravation. Though several of them are removed to a considerable distance from me, and from each other, I have borne their afflictions upon my heart with cordial sympathy; and it is with a particular desire of serving them, that I have undertaken the sad task of reviewing and transcribing these papers; which may almost be called the minutes of my own sighs and tears, over the poor remains of my eldest and (of this kind) dearest hope, when they were not as yet buried out of my sight.

They are, indeed, full of affection, and to be sure some may think they are too full of it: but let them consider the subject, and the circumstances, and surely they will pardon it. I apprehend, I could not have treated such a subject coldly, had I written upon it many years ago, when I was untaught in the school of affliction, and knew nothing of such a calamity as this but by speculation or report: how much less could I do it, when God had touched me in so tender a part, and (to allude to a celebrated

ancient story) called me out to appear on a public stage, as with an urn in my hand, which contained the ashes of my own child!

In such a sad situation, parents, at least, will forgive the tears of a parent, and those meltings of soul which overflow in the following pages. I have not attempted to run through the commonplace of immoderate grief, but have only selected a few obvious thoughts which I found peculiarly suitable to myself; and, I bless God, I can truly say, they gave me a solid and substantial relief, under a shock of sorrow, which would otherwise have broken my spirits.

On my own experience, therefore, I would recommend them to others, in the like condition. And let me intreat my friends and fellow-sufferers to remember, that it is not a low degree of submission to the divine will, which is called for in the ensuing discourse. It is comparatively an easy thing to behave with external decency, to refrain from bold censures and outrageous complaints, or to speak in the outward language of resignation. But it is not so easy to get rid of every repining thought, and to forbear taking it, in some degree at least, unkindly, that the God whom we love and serve, in whose friendship we have long trusted and rejoiced, should act what, to sense, seems so unfriendly a part: that he should take away a child; and if a child, that child; and if that child, at that age; and if at that age with this or that particular circumstance; which seems the very contrivance of Providence, to add double anguish to the wound: and all this, when he could so easily have recalled it; when we know him to have done it for so many others; when we have so earnestly desired it; when we sought it with such importunity, and yet, as we imagine, with so much submission too:—that, notwithstanding all this, he should tear it away with an inexorable hand, and leave us, it may be for a while, under the load, without any extraordinary comforts and supports, to balance so grievous a trial.—In these circumstances, not only to justify, but to glorify God in all,—cheerfully to subscribe to his will,—cordially to approve it as merciful and gracious,—so as to be able to say, as the pious and excellent archbishop of Cambray did, when his royal pupil, and the hopes of a nation were taken away,* "If there needed

* The Duke of Burgundy. See Cambray's Life, page 329.

no more than to move a straw to bring him to life again. I would not do it, since the divine pleasure is otherwise."—This, this is a difficult lesson indeed; a triumph of christian faith and love, which I fear many of us are yet to learn.

But let us follow after it, and watch against the first rising of a contrary temper, as most injurious to God, and prejudicial to ourselves. To preserve us against it, let us review the considerations now to be proposed, as what we are to digest into our hearts, and work into our thoughts and our passions. And I would hope, that if we do in good earnest make the attempt, we shall find this discourse a cooling and sweetening medicine, which may allay that inward heat and sharpness, with which, in a case like ours, the heart is often inflamed and corroded. I commend it, such as it is, to the blessing of the great physician, and could wish the reader to make up its many deficiencies, by Mr. Flavel's Token for mourners, and Dr. Grosvenor's Mourner; to which if it suit his relish, he may please to add sir William Temple's Essay on the Excess of Grief: three tracts which, in their very different strains and styles, I cannot but look upon as in the number of the best which our language, or, perhaps, any other, has produced upon this subject.

As for this little piece of mine, I question not, but, like the generality of single sermons, it will soon be worn out and forgotten. But in the meantime, I would humbly hope, that some tender parent, whom Providence has joined with me in sad similitude of grief, may find some consolation from it, while sitting by the coffin of a beloved child, or mourning over its grave. And I particularly hope it, with regard to those dear and valuable friends, whose sorrows on the like occasion, have lately been added to my own. I desire that though they be not expressly named, they would please to consider this sermon as most affectionately and respectfully dedicated to them; and would, in return, give me a share in their prayers, that all the vicissitudes of life may concur to quicken me in the duties of it, and to ripen me for that blessed world, where I hope many of those dear delights, which are now withering around us, will spring up in fairer and more durable forms. Amen.

Northampton, January 31, 1736-7.

POSTSCRIPT.

I could easily show, with how much propriety I have called the dear deceased an amiable and hopeful child, by a great many little stories, which parents would perhaps read with pleasure, and children might hear with some improvement: yet as I cannot be sure that no others may happen to read the discourse, I dare not trust my pen and my heart, on so delicate a subject. One circumstance I will however venture to mention, which may indeed be considered as a specimen of many others. As she was a great darling with most of our friends that knew her, she often received invitations to different places at the same time: and when I once asked her, on such an occasion, what made every body love her so well; she answered me, (with that simplicity and spirit, which alas! charmed me too much) "Indeed, papa, I cannot think, unless it be because I love every body." A sentiment obvious to the understanding of a child, yet not unworthy the reflection of the wisest man.†

SERMON.

And it came to pass when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, behold, yonder is that Shunamite: run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, is it well with thee? Is it well with thine husband? Is it well with the child? And she answered, IT IS WELL.—2 *Kings*, iv. 25, 26.

WHEN the apostle would encourage our hope and trust in the tenderness of Christ as the great high priest, and convince us that he is capable of being touched with a sympathetic sense of our infirmities, he argues at large from this consideration, that Jesus was in all points tempted like us; so that as he himself has suffer-

† Tibi monstrabo Amatorium sine Medicamento, sine Herbis, sine ullius Veneficæ Carmine, Si vis amari, oma.—SEN.

ed, being tempted, he knows how more compassionately to succour those that are under the like trials. Now this must surely intimate, that it is not in human nature, even in its most perfect state, so tenderly to commiserate any sorrows, as those which our own hearts have felt: as we cannot form a perfect idea of any bitter kind of draught, by the most exact description, till we have ourselves tasted it. It is probably for this reason, amongst others, that God frequently exercises such, as have the honour to be inferior shepherds in the flock of Christ, with a long train of various afflictions, that we may be able to comfort them who are in the like trouble, with those consolations with which we have ourselves been comforted of God. And, if we have the temper which becomes our office, will greatly reconcile us to our trials, to consider, that from our weeping eyes, and our bleeding hearts, a balm may be extracted to heal the sorrows of others, and a cordial to revive their fainting spirits. May we never be left to sink under our burden, in such a manner, that there should be room, after all we have boasted of the strength of religious supports, to apply to us the words of Eliphaz to Job, Thou hast strengthened the weak hands, and upheld him that was ready to fall; but now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it touches thee, and thou art troubled! May we never behave, as if the consolations of God were small; lest it should be as when a standard-bearer fainteth; and whole companies of soldiers are thrown into confusion and distress!

My friends, you are witnesses for me, that I have not stood by, as an unconcerned spectator amidst the desolations of your respective families, when God's

awful hand hath been lopping off those tender branches from them, which were once common hope and delight. I have often put my soul in the stead of yours, and endeavoured to give such a turn to my public as well as my private discourses, as might be a means of composing and cheering our minds, and forming you to a submissive temper, that you might be subject to the Father of Spirits, and live. In this view I have, at different times largely insisted on the example of Aaron, who held his peace, when his two eldest sons were struck dead in a moment by fire from the Lord, which destroyed them in the very act of their sin; and I have also represented that of Job, who, when the death of ten children by one blow was added to the spoil of his great possessions, could say, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. The instance which is before us, is not indeed so memorable as these; but to present circumstances it is, in many respects, more suitable: and it may the rather deserve our notice, as it shews us the wisdom, composure, and piety of one of the weaker and tenderer sex, on an occasion of such aggravated distress, that had Aaron or Job behaved just as she did, we must have acknowledged, that they had not sunk beneath the dignity of their character, nor appeared unworthy of our applause and our imitation.

Indeed there may be some reason to imagine, that it was with design to humble those who are in distinguished stations of life, and who have peculiar advantages and obligations to excel in religion, that God has shewn us in Scripture, as well as in common life, some bright examples of piety, where they could hardly have

been expected in so great a degree; and hath, as it were, perfected praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings. Thus when Zacharias, an aged priest, doubted the veracity of the angel which appeared to assure him of the birth of his child, which was to be produced in an ordinary way; Mary, an obscure young virgin, could believe a far more unexampled event, and said, with humble faith and thankful consent, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word. Jonah the prophet, though favoured with such immediate revelations, and so lately delivered, in a miraculous way, from the very belly of hell, was thrown into a most indecent transport of passion, on the withering of a gourd; so that he presumed to tell the Almighty to his face, that he did well to be angry even unto death: whereas this pious woman preserves the calmness and serenity of her temper, when she had lost a child, a son, an only child, who had been given beyond all natural hope, and therefore to be sure was so much the dearer, and the expectation from him so much the higher. Yet these expectations dashed almost in a moment; and this, when he was grown up to an age when children are peculiarly entertaining; for he was old enough to be with his father in the field, where no doubt he was diverting him with his fond prattle; yet he was not too big to be laid on his mother's knees, when he came home complaining of his head; so that he was probably about five or six years old. This amiable child was well in the morning, and dead by noon; a pale corpse in his mother's arms! and he now lay dead in the house; and yet she had the faith, and the goodness to say, "It is well."

This good woman had found the prophet Elisha grateful for all the favours he had received at her house; where she had from time to time accommodated him in his journies, and thought it an honour rather than an incumbrance. She had experienced the power of his prayers, in answer to which the child had been given; and it is extremely probable, that she also recollected the miracle which Elijah had wrought a few years before, though till that time the like had not been known in Israel, or on earth; I mean, in raising from the dead the child of that widow of Sarepta, who had nourished him during the famine. She might therefore think it a possible case, that the miracle might be renewed; at least, she knew not how to comfort herself better, than by going to so good a friend, and asking his counsels and his prayers, to enable her to bear her affliction, if it must not be removed.

Accordingly she hasted to him; and he, on the other side, discovered the temper of a real friend, in the message with which he sent Gehazi his servant to meet her, while she was yet afar off. The moment she appeared, the concerns of her whole family seem to have come into his kind heart at once, and he particularly asks, Is it well with thee? Is it well with thine husband? Is it well with the child? A beautiful example of that affectionate care for the persons and families of their friends, which christian ministers (who, like the prophets of old, are called men of God) should habitually bear about in their hearts; which should be awakened by every sight of them, and expressed on every proper occasion.

Her answer was very remarkable: she said, It is well. Perhaps she meant this, to divert the more particular

inquiry of the servant; as she had before made the same answer to her husband, when he had examined into the reason of her intended journey, as probably not knowing of the sad breach which had been made: she said, it is well; which was a civil way of intimating her desire that he would not ask any more particular questions. But I cannot see any reason to restrain the words to this meaning alone: we have ground to believe, from the piety she expressed in her first regards to Elisha, and the opportunities which she had of improving in religion by the frequent converse of that holy man, that when she used this language, she intended thereby to express her resignation to the divine will in what had lately passed: and this might be the meaning of her heart, (though one ignorant of the particulars of her case, might not fully understand it from such ambiguous words;) "It is well, "on the whole. Though my family be afflicted, we are "afflicted in faithfulness; though my dear babe be dead, "yet my heavenly Father is just, and he is good in all. "He knows how to bring glory to himself, and advan- "tage to us, from this stroke. Whether this application "do, or do not succeed, whether the child be, or be not "restored, it is still well; well with him, and well with "us; for we are in such wise and such gracious hands, "that I would not allow one murmuring word, or one "repining thought." So that, on the whole, the sentiment of this good Shunamite was much the same with that of Hezekiah, when he answered to that dreadful threatening which imported the destruction of his children, good is the word of the Lord which he hath spoken; or that of Job, when he heard that all his sons and his daughters were crushed under the ruins of their el-

der brother's house, and yet (in the fore-cited words) said, blessed be the name of the Lord.

Now this is the temper to which, by divine assistance, we should all labour to bring our own hearts, when God puts this bitter cup into our hands, and takes away with a stroke those dear little ones, which were the desire of our eyes, and the joy of our hearts. Let us not content ourselves, in such circumstances, with keeping the door of our lips, that we break not out into any indecencies of complaint; let us not attempt to harden ourselves against our sorrows by a stern insensibility, or that sullen resolution which sometimes says, "it is grief, "and I must bear it;" but let us labour, (for a great labour it will indeed be) to compose and quiet our souls, calmly to acquiesce in this painful dispensation, nay, cordially to approve it as in present circumstances every way fit.

It will be the main business of this discourse, to prove how reasonable such a temper is, or to show how much cause christian parents have to borrow the language of the text, when their infant offspring is taken away, and to say with the pious Shunamite, in the noblest sense that her words will bear,—It is well.

And here I would more particularly shew,—it is well in the general, because God does it:—it is surely well for the pious parents in particular, because it is the work of their covenant God;—they may see many respects in which it is evidently so, by observing what useful lessons it has a tendency to teach them:—and they have reason to hope, it is well with those dear creatures whom God hath removed in their early days.

These are surely convincing reasons to the understanding: yet who can say, that they shall be reasons to the heart? Arise, O God, and plead thine own cause in the most effectual manner! May thy powerful and gracious voice appease the swelling billows of the passions, and produce a great and delightful calm in our souls, in which we may yet enjoy thee and ourselves, though a part of our treasure be for the present swallowed up!

I. There is surely reason, in such a case, to say it is well,—because God doth it.

This passed for an unanswerable reason with David, I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it; and with good old Eli, under a severer trial than ours, It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth good in his sight. And shall we object against the force of it? Was it a reason to David, and to Eli, and is it not equally so to us? Or have we any new right to reply against God, which those eminent saints had not?

His kingdom ruleth over all; and there is not so much as a sparrow that falls to the ground without our Father's notice, but the very hairs of our head are all numbered by him. Can we then imagine that our dear children fall into their graves without his notice or interposition? Did that watchful eye that keepeth Israel, now, for the first time, slumber and sleep, and an enemy lay hold on that fatal moment, to bear away these precious spoils, and bury our joys and our hopes in the dust? Did some malignant hand stop up the avenues of life, and break its springs, so as to baffle all the tenderness of the parent, and all the skill of the physician? Whence does such a thought come, and whither would it lead? Diseases and accidents are but second causes,

which owe all their operations to the continued energy of the great original cause. Therefore God says, I will bereave them of children; I take away the desire of thine eyes with a stroke. He changeth their countenance, and sendeth them away. Thou Lord turnest man to destruction, and sayest, return ye children of men. And what shall we say? Are not the administrations of his providence wise and good? Can we teach him knowledge? Can we tax him with injustice? Shall the most high God learn of us how to govern the world, and be instructed by our wisdom when to remove his creatures from one state of being to another? Or do we imagine that his administration, in the general right and good, varies when he comes to touch our bone and our flesh? Is that the secret language of our soul, "that it is well, "others should drink of the cup, but not we; that any "families but ours should be broken, and any hearts "but ours should be wounded?" Who might not claim the like exemption? And what would become of the divine government in general; or where would be his obedient homage from his creatures, if each should begin to complain, as soon as it comes to his own turn to suffer? Much fitter is it for us to conclude, that our own afflictions may be as reasonable as those of others; that amidst all the clouds and darkness of his present dispensation, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne; and, in a word, that it is well, because God hath done it. It suits the general scheme of the divine providence, and, to an obedient submissive creature, that might be enough; but it is far from being all.

For,

II. Pious parents, under such a dispensation, may conclude it is well for them in particular,—because he, who hath done it, is their covenant God.

This is the great promise, to which all the saints under the Old and New Testament are heirs, I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and if we are interested in it, the happy consequence is, that we being his, all our concerns are his also; all are humbly resigned to him,—and graciously administered by him,—and incomparably better blessings bestowed and secured, than any which the most afflictive providence can remove.

If we have any share in this everlasting covenant, all that we are or have, must, of course, have been solemnly surrendered to God. And this is a thought peculiarly applicable to the case immediately in view. "Did I not," may the christian, in such a sad circumstance, generally say, "did I not, in a very solemn manner, "bring this my child to God in baptism, and in that "ordinance recognize his right to it? Did I not, with "all humble subjection to the Father of spirits, and Fa- "ther of mercies, lay it down at his feet, perhaps with "an express, at least to be sure with a tacit consent, "that it should be disposed of by him, as his infinite "wisdom and goodness should direct, whether for life "or for death? And am I now to complain of him, be- "cause he has removed not only a creature of his own, "but one of the children of his family? Or shall I pre- "tend, after all, to set up a claim in opposition to his? "A heathen parent, even from the light of nature, might "have learned silent submission: how much more then

" a christian parent, who hath presented his child to God " in this initiatory ordinance; and perhaps also many a " time, both before and since, hath presented himself at " the table of the Lord! Have I not there taken that " cup of blessings, with a declared resolution of accept- " ing every other cup, how bitter soever it might be, " which my heavenly Father should see fit to put into " my hand? When I have perhaps felt some painful " forebodings of what I am now suffering; I have, in " my own thoughts, particularly singled out that dear " object of my cares and my hopes, to lay it down anew " at my Father's feet, and say, Lord thou gavest it to " me, and I resign it to thee; continue, or remove it, " as thou pleasest. And did I then mean to trifle with " God? Did I mean in effect to say, Lord, I will give " it up, if thou wilt not take it?"

Reflect farther, I beseech you, on your secret retirements, and think, as surely some of you may, " How " often have I there been on my knees before God on " account of this child; and what was then my language? " Did I say, Lord, I absolutely insist on its recovery; " I cannot, on any terms or any considerations whatso- " ever, bear to think of losing it?" Surely we were none of us so indecently transported with the fondest passion, as to be so rash with our mouths as to utter such things before the great God. Such presumption had deserved a much heavier punishment than we are now bearing, and, if not retracted, may perhaps still have it. Did not one or another of us rather say, " Lord, I would hum- " bly intreat, with all due submission to thy superior " wisdom and sovereign pleasure, that my child may " live; but if it must be otherwise, not my will, but thine

" be done? I and mine are in thine hand, do with me, " and with them, as seemeth good in thy sight." And do we now blame ourselves for this? Would we unsay it again, and, if possible, take ourselves and our children out of his hands, whom we have so often owned as all-wise and all-gracious, and have chosen as our great guardian and theirs?

Let it farther be considered, it is done by that God who has accepted of this surrender, so as to undertake the administration of our affairs: " He is become my covenant God in Christ," may the christian say; " and, " in consequence of that covenant, he hath engaged to " manage the concerns and interests of his people so, " that all things shall work together for good to them " that love him: and do I not love him? Answer, Oh " my heart, dost thou not love thy God much better " than all the blessings which earth can boast, or which " the grave hath swallowed up? Wouldst thou resign " thine interest in him to recover these precious spoils, " to receive this dear child from the dust, a thousand " times fairer and sweeter than before? Rather let death " devour every remaining comfort, and leave me alone " with him; with whom when I indeed am, I miss not " the creatures, but rather rejoice in their absence, as I " am then more entire with him whom my soul loveth. " And if I do indeed love him, this promise is mine, " and all things, and therefore this sad event in particu- " lar, shall work together for my good. Shall I not then " say, it is well? What if it exceeded all the stretch of " my thoughts, to conceive how it could, in any in- " stance, be so? What are my narrow conceptions, that " they should pretend to circumscribe infinite wisdom,

"faithfulness, and mercy? Let me rather, with Abra-
"ham, give glory to God, and in hope believe against
"hope."

Once more; let us consider how many invaluable blessings are given us by this covenant, and then judge whether we have not the utmost reason to acquiesce in such an event of Providence. "If I am in covenant with God," may the believer say, "then he hath par-
"doned my sins, and renewed my heart, and hath made
"his blessed Spirit dwelling in me, the sacred bond of
"an everlasting union between him and my soul. He
"is leading me through the wilderness, and will, ere
"long, lead me out of it to the heavenly Canaan. And
"how far am I already arrived in my journey thither,
"now that I am come to the age of losing a child! And
"when God hath done all this for me, is he rashly to
"be suspected of unkindness? He that spared not his
"own Son; he that gave me with him his spirit and his
"kingdom, why doth he deny, or why doth he remove,
"any other favour? Did he think the life of this child
"too great a good to grant, when he thought not Christ
"and glory too precious? Away with that thought, O
"my unbelieving heart, and with every thought which
"would derogate from such rich amazing grace, or
"would bring any thing in comparison with it. Art
"thou under these obligations to him, and wilt thou
"yet complain? With what grace, with what decency
"canst thou dispute this, or any other matter, with thy
"God? What right have I yet to cry any more to the
"King?" Would any of my brethren venture to say,
"what though I be a child of God, and an heir of glo-
"ry, it matters not, for my gourd is withered; that plea-

"sant plant which was opening so fair and so delightful, "under the shadow of which I expected long to have "sat, and even the rock of ages cannot shelter me so "well? I can behold that beloved face no more, and "therefore I will not look upward to behold the face of "God, I will not look forward to Christ and to hea-"ven?" Would this, my friends, be the language of a real christian? Nay, are there not many abandoned sinners who would tremble at such expressions? Yet is it not in effect the language of our tumultuous passions, when, like Rachael, we are mourning for our children, and will not be comforted, because they are not? Is it not our language while we cannot, like the pious Shunamite in the text, bring our afflicted hearts to say, It is well.

III. Pious parents, in such a circumstance, have farther reason to say, It is well,—as they may observe an apparent tendency in such a dispensation to teach them a variety of the most instructive and useful lessons, in a very convincing and effectual manner.

It is a just observation of Solomon, that the rod and reproof give wisdom; and it is peculiarly applicable to such a chastisement of our heavenly Father. It should therefore be our great care to hear the rod and him that hath appointed it; and so far as it hath a tendency to teach us our duty, and to improve the divine life in our souls, we have the highest reason to say, that it is indeed well.

Every affliction hath in its degree this kind of tendency, and it is the very reason for which we are thus chastened, that we may profit by our sorrows, and be

made partakers of the God's holiness. But this dispensation is particularly adapted, in a very affecting manner,—to teach us the vanity of the world,—to warn us of the approach of our own death,—to quicken us in the duties incumbent upon us, especially to our surviving children,—and to produce a more entire resignation to the Divine Will, which is indeed the surest foundation of quiet, and source of happiness.

I shall insist a little more particularly on each of these; and I desire that it may be remembered that the sight and knowledge of such mournful providencies as are now before us, should, in some degree, be improved to these purposes, even by those parents whose families are most prosperous and joyful: may they learn wisdom and piety from what we suffer, and their improvements shall be acknowledged as an additional reason for us to say, It is well.

1. When God takes away our children from us, it is a very affecting lesson of the vanity of the world.

There is hardly a child born into it, on whom the parents do not look with some pleasing expectation that it shall comfort them concerning their labour. This makes the toil of education easy and delightful: and truly it is very early that we begin to find a sweetness in it, which abundantly repays all the fatigue. Five, or four, or three, or two years, make discoveries which afford immediate pleasure, and which suggest future hopes. Their words, their actions, their very looks touch us, (if they be amiable and promising children,) in a tender, but very powerful manner; their little arms twine about our hearts; and there is something more penetra-

ting in their first broken accents of endearment, than in all the pomp and ornament of words. Every infant-year increases the pleasure, and nourishes the hope. And where is the parent so wise, and so cautious, and so constantly intent on his journey to heaven, as not to measure back a few steps to earth again, on such a plausible and decent occasion, as that of introducing the young stranger into the amusements, nay perhaps, where circumstances will admit it, into the elegancies of life, as well as its more serious and important business? What fond calculations do we form of what it will be, from what it is! How do we in thought open every blossom of sprightliness, or humanity, or piety to its full spread, and ripen it to a sudden maturity! But, oh, who shall teach those that have never felt it, how it tears the very soul, when God roots up the tender plant with an inexorable hand, and withers the bud in which the colours were beginning to glow! Where is now our delight? Where is our hope? Is it in the coffin? Is it in the grave? Alas! all the loveliness of person, of genius, and of temper, serves but to point and to poison the arrow, which is drawn out of our own quiver to wound us. Vain, delusive, transitory joys! "And such, oh my soul," will the christian say, "such are thine earthly "comforts in every child, in every relative, in every pos- "session of life; such are the objects of thy hopes, and "thy fears, thy schemes, and thy labours, where earth "alone is concerned. Let me then, once for all, direct "mine eyes to another and a better state. From these "broken cisterns, the fragments of which may hurt me "indeed, but can no longer refresh me, let me look to "the fountain of living waters. From these setting stars,

"or rather these bright but vanishing meteors, which "make my darkness so much the more sensible, let me "turn to the Father of lights. O Lord, what wait I for? "my hope is in thee, my sure abode, my everlasting "confidence! My gourds wither, my children die; but "the Lord liveth, and blessed be my rock, and let the "God of my salvation be exalted. I see in one instance "more, the sad effects of having over-loved the crea- "ture; let me endeavour for the future, by the divine "assistance, to fix my affections there where they cannot "exceed; but where all the ardour of them will be as "much my security and my happiness, as it is now my "snare and my distress."

2. The removal of our children by such awful strokes may warn us of the approach of our own death.

Hereby God doth very sensibly shew us, and those around us, that all flesh is as grass, and all the glory and loveliness of it like the flower of the field. And when our own habitations are made the houses of mourning, and ourselves the leaders of that sad procession, it may surely be expected that we should lay it to heart, so as to be quickened and improved by the view. "Have my "children died in the morning of their days, and can I "promise myself that I shall see the evening of mine? "Now perhaps may I say, in a more literal sense than "ever, the graves are ready for me. One of my family, "and some of us may add, the first-born of it, is gone "as it were to take possession of the sepulchre in all "our names; and ere long I shall lie down with my child "in the same bed; yea, perhaps, many of the feet that "followed it shall attend me thither. Our dust shortly "shall be blended together; and who can tell but this

"providence might chiefly be intended as a warning "blow to me, that these concluding days of my life "might be more regular, more spiritual, and more use- "ful than the former?"

3. The providence before us may be farther improved to quicken us in the duties of life, and especially in the education of surviving children.

It is, on the principles I hinted above, an engagement, that whatever our hand findeth to do, we should do it with all our might, since it so plainly shews us that we are going to the grave, where there is no device, nor knowledge, nor working: but permit me especially to observe, how peculiarly the sentiments we feel on these sad occasions, may be improved for the advantage of our dear offspring who yet remain, and quicken us to a proper care in their religious education.

We all see that it is a very reasonable duty, and every christian parent resolves that he will ere long apply himself to it; but I am afraid, great advantages are lost by a delay, which we think we can easily excuse. Our hands are full of a variety of affairs, and our children are yet very young: we are therefore ready to imagine it is a good husbandry of time to defer our attempts for their instruction to a more convenient season, when they may be able to learn more in an hour, than the labour of days could now teach them; besides that we are apprehensive of danger in over-loading their tender spirits, especially when they are perhaps under indisposition, and need to be diverted, rather than gravely advised and instructed.

But I beseech you, my friends, let us view the matter with that impartiality, which the eloquence of death

hath a tendency to produce. "That lovely creature that "God hath now taken away, though its days were few, "though its faculties were weak, yet might it not have "known a great deal more of religion than it did, and "felt a great deal more of it too, had I faithfully and "prudently done my part? How did it learn language "so soon, and in such a compass and readiness? Not by "multiplied rules, nor laboured instruction, but by con-"versation. And might it not have learned much more "of divine things by conversation too, if they had been "allowed a due share in our thoughts and our discour-"ses; according to the charge given to the Israelites, to "talk of them going out and coming in, lying down "and rising up? How soon did it learn trifles, and re-"tain them, and, after its little way, observe and reason "upon them, perhaps with a vivacity that sometimes "surprised me! And had I been as diligent as I ought, "who can tell what progress it might have made in di-"vine knowledge? Who can tell but as a reward to "these pious cares, God might have put a word into "its dying lips, which I might all my life have recol-"lected with pleasure, and out of its feeble mouth might "have perfected praise?"

My friends, let us humble ourselves deeply before God under a sense of our past neglects, and let us learn our future duty. We may perhaps be ready fondly to say, "oh that it were possible my child could be re-"stored to me again, though it were but for a few weeks "or days! how diligently would I attempt to supply my "former deficiencies!" Unprofitable wish! Yet may the thought be improved for the good of surviving chil-dren. How shall we express our affection to them? Not

surely by indulging all the demands of appetite and fancy, in many early instances so hazardous, and so fatal; not by a solicitude to treasure up wealth for them, whose only portion may perhaps be a little coffin and shroud. No; our truest kindness to them will be to endeavour, by divine grace, to form them to an early inquiry after God, and Christ, and Heaven, and a love for real goodness in all the forms of it which may come within their observation and notice. Let us apply ourselves immediately to this task, as those that remember there is a double uncertainty, in their lives, and in ours. In a word, let us be that with regard to every child that yet remains, which we proposed and engaged to be to that which is taken away, when we pleaded with God for the continuance of its life, at least for a little while, that it might be farther assisted in the preparations for death and eternity. If such resolutions be formed and pursued, the death of one may be the means of spiritual life to many; and we shall surely have reason to say, It is well, if it teach us so useful a lesson.

4. The providence before us may have a special tendency to improve our resignation to the Divine Will; and if it does so, it will indeed be well.

There is surely no imaginable situation of mind so sweet and so reasonable, as that which we feel when we humbly refer ourselves in all things to the divine disposal, in an entire suspension of our own will, seeing and owning the hand of God, and bowing before it with a filial acquiescence. This is chiefly to be learned from suffering; and perhaps there is no suffering which is fitter to teach it, than this. In many other afflictions there is such a mixture of human interposition, that we

are ready to imagine, we may be allowed to complain, and to chide a little. Indignation mingles itself with our grief; and when it does so, it warms the mind, though with a feverish kind of heat, and in an unnatural flow of spirits, leads the heart into a forgetfulness of God. But here it is so apparently his hand, that we must refer it to him, and it will appear bold impiety to quarrel at what is done. In other instances we can at least flatter ourselves with hope, that the calamity may be diverted, or the enjoyment recovered; but here alas! there is no hope. "Tears will not," as* sir William Temple finely expresses it, "water the lovely plant so as to cause "it to grow again; sighs will not give it new breath, "nor can we furnish it with life and spirits by the waste "of our own." The sentence is finally gone forth, and the last fatal stroke irrecoverably given. Opposition is vain; a forced submission gives but little rest to the mind; a cordial acquiescence in the Divine Will is the only thing in the whole world that can ease the labouring heart, and restore true serenity. Remaining corruption will work on such an occasion, and a painful struggle will convince the Christian how imperfect his present attainments are: and this will probably lead him to an attentive review of the great reasons for submission; it will lead him to urge them on his own soul, and to plead them with God in prayer; till at length the storm is laid, and tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience a hope which maketh not ashamed, while the love of God is so shed abroad in the heart, as to humble it for every preceding opposition,

* Temple's Essays, vol. i. p. 178.

and to bring it even to a real approbation of all that so wise and good a friend hath done; resigning every other interest and enjoyment to his disposal, and sitting down with the sweet resolution of the prophet, Though the fig-tree do not blossom, and there be no fruit in the vine, &c. yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation. And when we are brought to this, the whole horizon clears, and the sun breaks forth in its strength.

Now I appeal to every sincere christian in this assembly, whether there will not be reason indeed to say It is well, if by this painful affliction we more sensibly learn the vanity of the creature; if we are awakened to serious thoughts of our own latter end; if by it we are quickened in the duties of life, and formed to a more entire resignation of soul, and acquiescence in the Divine Will. I will only add once more, and it is a thought of delightful importance,

IV. That pious parents have reason to hope, it is well with those dear creatures who are taken away in their early days.

I see not that the word of God hath any where passed a damnatory sentence on any infants; and if it has not, I am sure we have no authority to do it; especially considering with how much compassion the Divine Being speaks of them in the instance of the Ninevites, and on some other occasions. Perhaps, as some pious divines have conjectured, they may constitute a very considerable part of the number of the elect, and, as in Adam they all died, they may in Christ all be made alive. At least, methinks, from the covenant which God

made with Abraham, and his seed, the blessings of which are come upon the believing Gentiles, there is reason to hope well concerning the infant offspring of God's people, early devoted, and often recommended to him, that their souls will be bound in the bundle of life, and be loved for their parent's sakes.

It is, indeed, impossible for us to say, how soon children may be capable of contracting personal guilt. They are quickly able to distinguish, in some degree, between right and wrong; and it is too plain, that they as quickly, in many instances, forget the distinction. The corruptions of nature begin early to work, and shew the need of sanctifying grace; yet, without a miracle, it cannot be expected that much of the Christian scheme should be understood by these little creatures, in the first dawning of reason, though a few evangelical phrases may be taught, and, sometimes, by a happy kind of accident, may be rightly applied. The tender heart of a parent may, perhaps, take a hint, from hence to terrify itself, and exasperate all its other sorrows, by that sad thought, "What if my dear child be perished forever? "gone from our embraces, and all the little pleasures "we could give it, to everlasting darkness and pain?" Horrible imagination! and Satan may, perhaps, take the advantage of these gloomy moments, to aggravate every little infirmity into a crime, and to throw us into agony, which no other view of the affliction can possibly give, to a soul penetrated with a sense of eternity. Nor do I know a thought, in the whole compass of nature, that hath a more powerful tendency to produce suspicious notions of God, and a secret alienation of heart from him.

Now for this very reason, methinks, we should guard against so harsh a conclusion, lest we, at once, injure the Divine Being, and torture ourselves. And, surely, we may easily fall on some reflections which may encourage our hopes, where little children are concerned; and it is only of that case that I am now speaking. Let us think of the blessed God, as the great parent of universal nature; whose tender mercies are over all his works; who declares that judgment is his strange work; who is very pitiful, and of tender mercy, gracious and full of compassion; who delighteth in mercy; who waiteth to be gracious; and endureth, with much long-suffering, even the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. He intimately knows our frame, and our circumstances; he sees the weakness of the unformed mind; how forcibly the volatile spirits are struck with a thousand new amusing objects around it, and borne away as a feather before the wind; and, on the other hand, how, when distempers seize it, the feeble powers are over-borne in a moment, and rendered incapable of any degree of application and attention. And, Lord, wilt thou open thine eyes on such a one, to bring it into strict judgment with thee? Amidst all the instances of thy patience, and thy bounty, to the most abandoned of mankind, are these little helpless creatures the objects of thy speedy vengeance, and final severity?

Let us farther consider, as it is a very comfortable thought in these circumstances, the compassionate regard which the blessed Jesus expressed to little children. He was much displeased with those who forbad their being brought to him; and said, Suffer them to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the

kingdom of God; and taking them up in his arms, he laid his hands upon them, and blessed them. In another instance we are told, that he took a little child, (who appears to have been old enough to come at his call) and set him in the midst of his disciples, and said, except ye become as little children, you shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of Heaven. May we not then hope that many little children are admitted into it? And may not that hope be greatly confirmed from whatever, of an amiable and regular disposition, we have observed in those that are taken away? If we have seen* a tenderness of conscience, in any thing which they apprehend would displease the great and good God; a love to truth; a readiness to attend on divine worship, from some imperfect notion of its general design, though the particulars of it could not be understood; an open, candid, benevolent heart; a tender sense of obligation, and a desire, according to their little power, to repay it; may we not hope that these were some of the first fruits of the Spirit, which he would, in due time, have ripened into Christian graces, and are now, on a sudden, perfected by that great Almighty Agent who worketh all, and in all?

Sure I am, that this blessed Spirit hath no inconsiderable work to perform on the most established Christians, to finish them to a complete meetness for the heavenly world; would to God, there were no greater blemishes to be observed in their character, than the little vanities of children! With infinite ease then can he perfect what is lacking in their unfinished minds, and pour out upon them, in a moment, that light and grace, which

* I bless God, all these things were very evident in that dear child, whose death occasioned this discourse.

shall qualify them for a state, in comparison of which, ours on earth is but childhood or infancy.

Now what a noble source of consolation is here! Then may the affectionate parent say, "It is well, not "only with me, but with the child too: incomparably "better than if my ardent wishes, and importunate "prayers for its recovery, had been answered. It is in- "deed well, if that beloved creature be fallen asleep in "Christ; if that dear lamb be folded in the arms of "the compassionate shepherd, and gathered into his "gracious bosom. Self-love might have led me to wish "its longer continuance here; but if I truly loved my "child with a solid, rational affection, I should much "rather rejoice, to think it is gone to a heavenly Father, "and to the world of perfected Spirits above. Had it "been spared to me, how slowly could I have taught it! "and in the full ripeness of its age, what had it been, "when compared with what it now is! How is it shot "up on a sudden, from the converse and the toys of "children, to be a companion with saints and angels, in "the employment, and the blessedness of heaven! Shall "I then complain of it as a rigorous severity to my fa- "mily, that God hath taken it to the family above? And "what if he hath chosen to bestow the distinguished "favour on *that one* of my little flock, who was formed "to take the tenderest hold of my heart? Was there "unkindness in that? What if he saw, that the very "sprightliness and softness which made it to me so ex- "quisitely delightful, might, in time, have betrayed it "into ruin; and took this method of sheltering it from "trials, which had otherwise been too hard for it, and so "fixing a seal on its character and happiness? What if "that strong attachment of my heart to it, had been a

"snare to the child, and to me? Or what if it had been "otherwise? Do I need additional reasons to justify the "Divine conduct, in an instance which my child is cele- "brating in the songs of heaven? If it is a new and un- "tasted affliction to have such a tender branch lopped "off, it is also a new honour to be the parent of a glo- "rified saint." And, as good Mr. Howe expressed it on another occasion, "If God be pleased, and his glo- "rified creature be pleased, who are we that we should "be displeased?"*

"Could I wish, that this young inhabitant of hea- "ven should be degraded to earth again? Or would it "thank me for that wish? Would it say, that it was the "part of a wise parent, to call it down from a sphere of "such exalted services and pleasures, to our low life "here upon earth? Let me rather be thankful for the "pleasing hope, that though God loves my child too "well to permit it to return to me, he will ere long "bring me to it. And then that endeared paternal affec- "tion, which would have been a cord to tie me to earth, "and have added new pangs to my removal from it, "will be as a golden chain to draw me upwards, and add "one farther charm and joy even to Paradise itself." And oh, how great a joy! to view the change, and to compare that dear idea, so fondly laid up, so often re- viewed, with the now glorious original, in the improve- ments of the upper world! To borrow the words of the sacred writer, in a very different sense; "I said, I was "desolate and bereaved of children, and who hath "brought up these? I was left alone, and these, where "have they been? Was this my desolation? this my sor-

* Howe's Life, pag. 32. folio edit.

"row? to part with thee for a few days, that I might re-
"ceive thee forever, and find thee what thou art!" It is for no language, but that of heaven, to describe the sacred joy which such a meeting must occasion.

In the mean time, Christians, let us keep up the lively expectation of it, and let what has befallen us draw our thoughts upwards. Perhaps they will sometimes, before we are aware, sink to the grave, and dwell in the tombs that contain the poor remains of what was once so dear to us. But let them take flight from thence to more noble, more delightful scenes. And I will add, let the hope we have of the happiness of our children render God still dearer to our souls. We feel a very tender sense of the kindness which our friends expressed towards them, and think, indeed very justly, that their affectionate care for them lays a lasting obligation upon us. What love then, and what service do we owe to thee, Oh, gracious Father, who hast, we hope, received them into thine house above, and art now entertaining them there with unknown delight, though our former methods of commerce with them be cut off! "Lord," should each of us say in such a case, "I would take "what thou art doing to my child as done to myself, "and as a specimen and earnest of what shall shortly "be done." It is therefore *well.*

It only remains, that I conclude with a few hints of farther improvement.

1. Let pious parents, who have lost hopeful children in maturer age, join with others in saying, It is well.

My friends, the reasons which I have been urging at large, are common to you with us; and permit me to add, that as your case has its peculiar distress, it has, I

think, in a yet greater degree, its peculiar consolations too.

I know you will say, that it is inexpressibly grievous and painful, to part with children who were grown up into most amiable friends, who were your companions in the ways of God, and concerning whom you had a most agreeable prospect, that they would have been the ornaments and supports of religion in the rising age, and extensive blessings to the world, long after you had quitted it. These reasonings have, undoubtedly, their weight; and they have so, when considered in a very different view. Must you not acknowledge it is well, that you enjoyed so many years of comfort in them? that you reaped so much solid satisfaction from them? and saw those evidences of a work of grace upon their hearts, which give you such abundant reason to conclude that they are now received into that inheritance of glory, for which they were so apparently made meet? Some of them, perhaps, had already quitted their Father's house: as for others, had God spared their lives, they might have been transplanted into families of their own: and if, instead of being removed to another house, or town, or country, they are taken by God into another world, is that a matter of so great complaint; when that world is so much better, and you are yourselves so near it? I put it to your hearts, Christians, would you rather have chosen to have buried them in their infancy, or never to have known the joys and the hopes of a parent, now you know the vicissitude of sorrow, and of disappointment? But perhaps, you will say, that you chiefly grieve for that loss which the world has sustained by the removal of those, from whom it might reasonably have expected

so much future service. This is, indeed, a generous and a christian sentiment, and there is something noble in those tears which flow on such a consideration. But do not so remember your relation to earth, as to forget that which you bear to heaven; and do not so wrong the divine wisdom and goodness, as to suppose, that when he takes away from hence promising instruments of service, he there lays them by as useless. Much more reasonable is it to conclude, that their sphere of action, as well as happiness, is enlarged, and that the church above hath gained incomparably more, than that below can be supposed to have lost by their death.

On the whole, therefore, far from complaining of the divine conduct in this respect, it will become you, my friends, rather to be very thankful that these dear children were spared so long, to accompany and entertain you in so many stages of your short journey through life, to answer so many of your hopes, and to establish so many more beyond all fear of disappointment. Reflect on all that God did in and upon them, on all he was beginning to do by them, and on what you have great reason to believe he is now doing for them; and adore his name, that he has left you these dear memorials, by which your case is so happily distinguished from ours, whose hopes in our children withered in the very bud; or from theirs, who saw those who were once so dear to them, perishing, as they have cause to fear, in the paths of the destroyer.

But while I speak thus, methinks I am alarmed, lest I should awaken the far more grievous sorrows of some mournful parent, whom it will not be so easy to comfort. My brethren and friends, what shall I say to you,

who are lamenting over your Absaloms, and almost wishing you had died for them? Shall I urge *you* to say It is well? Perhaps you may think it a great attainment, if, like Aaron, when his sons died before the Lord, you can hold your peace, under the awful stroke. My soul is troubled for you; my words are almost swallowed up. Yet let me remind you of this, that you do not certainly know what Almighty grace might do for these lamented creatures, even in the latest moments, and have therefore no warrant confidently to pronounce that they are assuredly perished. And if you cannot but tremble in the too probable fear of it, labour to turn your eyes from so dark a prospect to those better hopes which God is setting before you. For surely you still have abundant reason to rejoice in that grace, which gives your own lives to you as a prey, and has brought you so near to that blessed world, where, hard as it is now to conceive it, you will have laid aside every affection of nature, which interferes with the interests of God, and prevents your most cheerful acquiescence in every particular of his wise and gracious determinations.

2. From what we have heard, let us learn not to think of the loss of our children with a slavish dread.

It is to a parent indeed such a cutting stroke, that I wonder not if nature shrink back at the very mention of it: and, perhaps, it would make those to whom God hath denied children more easy, if they knew what some of the happiest parents feel in an uncertain apprehension of the loss of theirs: an apprehension which strikes with peculiar force on the mind, when experience hath taught us the anguish of such an affliction in former instances.

But let us not anticipate evils: perhaps all our children, who are hitherto spared, may follow us to the grave: or, if otherwise, we sorrow not as those who have no hope. We may have reason still to say, It is well; and through divine grace, we may also have hearts to say it. Whatever we lose, if we be the children of God, we shall never lose our heavenly Father. He will still be our support, and our joy. And therefore, let us turn all our anxiety about uncertain, future events, into an holy solicitude to please him, and to promote religious impressions in the hearts of our dear offspring; that if God should see fit to take them away, we may have a claim to the full consolations, which I have been representing in the preceding discourse.

3. Let us not sink in hopeless sorrow, or break out into clamorous complaints, if God has brought this heavy affliction upon us.

A stupid indifference would be absurd and unnatural: God and man might look upon us as acting a most unworthy part, should we be like the ostrich in the wilderness, which hardeneth herself against her young ones, as if they were not hers; because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding. Let us sorrow like men, and like parents; but let us not, in the mean time, forget that we are Christians. Let us remember how common the calamity is; few parents are exempt from it; some of the most pious and excellent have lost amiable children, with circumstances perhaps of peculiar aggravation. It is a trial which God hath chosen for the exercise of some who have been eminently dear to him, as we may learn from a variety of instances both ancient and modern. Let us

recollect our many offences against our heavenly Father, those sins which such a dispensation may properly bring to our remembrance; and let that silence us, and teach us to own, that it is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, and that we are punished less than our iniquities deserve. Let us look round on our surviving comforts; let us look forward to our future, our eternal hopes; and we shall surely see, that there is still room for praise, still a call for it. Let us review the particulars mentioned above, and then let conscience determine whether it doth not become us, in this particular instance, to say it steadily, and cheerfully too, *even this is well.* And may the God of all grace and comfort apply these considerations to our mind, that we may not only own them, but feel them, as a reviving cordial when our heart is overwhelmed within us! In the mean time, let me beseech you whose tabernacles are in peace, and whose children are yet about you, that you would not be severe in censuring our tears, till you have experimentally known our sorrows, and yourselves tasted the wormwood and the gall, which we, with all our comforts, must have in a long and bitter remembrance.

4. Let those of us who are under the rod, be very solicitous to improve it aright, that in the end it may indeed be well.

Hear, my brethren, my friends and fellow-sufferers, hear and suffer the word of exhortation. Let us be much concerned, that we may not bear all the smart of such an affliction, and, through our own folly, lose all that benefit which might, otherwise, be a rich equivalent. In proportion to the grievousness of the stroke, should be our care to attend to the design of it. Let us, now God

is calling us to mourning and lamentation, be searching and trying our ways, that we may turn again unto the Lord. Let us review the conduct of our lives, and the state and tenor of our affections, that we may observe what hath been deficient, and what irregular; that proper remedies may be applied, and those important lessons more thoroughly learnt, which I was mentioning under the former branch of my discourse. Let us pray, that through our tears we may read our duty, and that by the heat of the furnace we may be so melted, that our dross may be purged away, and the divine image instamped on our souls in brighter and fairer characters. To sum up all in one word, let us endeavour to set our hearts more on that God, who is infinitely better to us than ten children, who hath given us a name better than that of sons and daughters, and can abundantly supply the place of all earthly enjoyments with the rich communications of his grace: nay, perhaps, we may add, who hath removed some darling of our hearts, lest to our infinite detriment it should fill his place there, and, by alienating us from his love and service, have a fatal influence on our present peace, and our future happiness.

Eternal glory, my friends, is so great a thing, and the complete love and enjoyment of God so unutterably desirable, that it is well worth our while to bear the sharpest sorrows, by which we may be more perfectly formed for it. We may even congratulate the death of our children, if it bring us nearer to our heavenly Father; and teach us, (instead of filling this vacancy in our heart with some new vanity, which may shortly renew our sorrows) to consecrate the whole of it to him who alone deserves, and can alone answer the most intense

affection. Let us try what of this kind may be done. We are now going to the table of the Lord,* to that very table where our vows have often been sealed, where our comforts have often been resigned, where our Isaacs have been conditionally sacrificed, and where we commemorate the real sacrifice which God hath made even of his only begotten Son for us. May our other sorrows be suspended, while we mourn for him whom we have pierced, as for an only Son, and are in bitterness as for a first-born. From his blood consolations spring up, which will flourish even on the graves of our dear children; and the sweetness of that cup which he there gives us, will temper the most distasteful ingredients of the other. Our houses are not so with God, as they once were, as we once expected they would have been, but he hath made with us an everlasting covenant, and these are the tokens of it. Blessed be his name, we hold not the mercies of that covenant by so precarious a tenure as the life of any creature: It is well ordered in all things and sure: may it be all our salvation, and all our desire; and then it is but a little while, and all our complaints will cease. God will wipe away these tears from our eyes; our peaceful and happy spirits shall ere long meet with those of our children which he hath taken to himself. Our bodies shall sleep, and ere long shall also awake, and arise with theirs. Death, that inexorable destroyer, shall be swallowed up in victory, while we and ours surround the throne with everlasting HALLELUJAHS, and own, with another evidence than we can now perceive, with another spirit than we can now express, that all was indeed well. AMEN.

* N. B. This sermon was preached October 3, 1736, it being Sacrament Day. The child died October 1.

EXTRACT FROM A DISCOURSE

BY THE REV. ARCHIBALD MACLAINE, D. D.

I. With respect to the visible or material world, what an elevated pleasure, similar to that of the Psalmist's in our text, must arise in the religious mind, when it contemplates the wisdom, power, and goodness which are displayed in the earth, and in the vault of heaven, with such beauty and magnificence! But it is the religious mind alone which enjoys *this* pleasure truly and fully; because it arises from the grand effects to the wonderful cause, and sees in that cause the gracious and benevolent Being who is *mindful of man.* The mechanical sophistry of the atheist, and even the gloomy doubtings of the sceptic, tarnish the beauty of nature, and leave the mind dark, anxious, and uncomfortable, amidst all its charms: nor does the merely nominal professor of religion, who meditates little upon the divine perfections and government, see the world in a much better light. He scarcely derives any higher enjoyment from it, than as it contributes to the support of animal life, and the gratification of his external senses. This is not the case of the religious man: he considers the heavens as *declaring the glory of the Lord*, and the earth as full of *the riches* of its Maker: he observes the benign influence of the Almighty, warming in the sun, refreshing in the air, glowing in the stars, and diffusing life, intelligence, and well-being, in various de-

grees, through his universal empire. These views excite veneration and a pleasing kind of astonishment; they nourish gratitude, hope, confidence; and thus produce the most joyful emotions of which the human heart is susceptible.

Secondly, Consider the different views which the religious man, and the man who *lives without God in the world*, must have, respectively, of their existence and condition in this present state. The former, seeing God in all things, looks up to him, in nature, as a providential protector, and in redemption and grace, as a father and a friend. He views his present state as a scene of infancy and trial; and even its evils and pains, as the dispensations of paternal wisdom and goodness, for the exercise of virtue, and the correction of moral disorder. In this friendly aspect of nature and grace he humbly acquiesces, and even *goes on his way* rejoicing in expectation and hope. But to the man who is destitute of religious principles, these comforting views are unknown. He is, as it were, in a fatherless world, with no security for the continuance of his enjoyments, and no resource, when they are succeeded, in the instability of external things, by disappointment and sorrow. Little accustomed to exercise and nourish his faith in that supreme goodness, wisdom, and power, which are the stable foundations of hope and confidence, he ascribes the evils he suffers to accidental causes, which, instead of alleviating, exasperate their pains; and he is deprived of the consolation and support which arise from a persuasion, that the great Being who fills immensity, is *mindful of man.*

Consider, thirdly, how peculiarly interesting society, friendship, and domestic relations are rendered by religious views—by the consideration, that God is *mindful of man*. When the good man considers his friends and relatives, as the offspring of one Supreme Parent, as fellow-members with him of the great family of God, this point of view renders, surely, the ties of nature still more tender; the bonds of friendship more interesting and delicious; the feelings of humanity still more liberal and extensive. In this point of view, the good man considers his connexions with the righteous as immortal. There is no worthy and eminent character, with whom he has conversed, or whose virtues have been recorded in history, whom he may not hope to meet, one day, in that paternal and celestial *house*, *where there are many mansions*. In this view of the great family of God, as having only its commencement here below, and considering himself as a member of this family, his mind, while he runs his race upon earth, is elevated with the prospect of a nobler society, and the hopes of arising to a sublimer sphere of action and felicity, in the kingdom of his Father. No such prospects embellish or ennoble the connexions of the irreligious man with his fellow-creatures in a present world. He considers the human race as a set of beings, who came into existence he knows not *how*, and who, successively disappearing, pass he knows not *where*, nor for what *purpose*. In this view of the human race, unconnected with an almighty and benevolent Creator, the amiable ties between parents, children, brothers, friends, and all the other endearing relations of human society, are transient and precarious connexions—connexions of a short and uncertain du-

ration here, with no prospect of a renewal hereafter, in more improved forms and happier situations. This, where all reflection and forecast are not banished, sheds an uncomfortable gloom on the present scene of human life, and covers, with thick and painful darkness, the departing moment.

What language, then, can expresss the frenzy of those, who voluntarily deprive themselves of the comfort and delight which arise from a persuasion that the Great Being, who formed the universe, is *mindful of man*, and will direct the course and secure the true interests of his faithful servants, in all the periods of their eternal duration? While they banish him from their thoughts—while they close their eyes on the empire of his providence, the authority of his laws, the manifestations of his mercy, and the offer of his grace, they forfeit the most rational and solid comforts of a present life, and the sublime hopes of life eternal.

Let us therefore guard against every thing that can have a tendency to exclude us from the protection of this glorious Being, and secure his favour by faith in his promises, and sincere efforts to obey his holy and righteous laws. Let us consider how vain all projects of happiness must be, which we form without an humble dependance on Him, who is the only source of all true felicity. He, who can embitter the joys of prosperity, and soften the anguish of adversity and sorrow—He, who can make all the events of time contribute to the happiness of his faithful servants, in endless scenes of existence—He surely ought to be the supreme object of our pious regard, in all the duties, events, trials, and relations of human life. No state or condition, however pain-

ful, can render us unhappy, while we enjoy his favour, his direction, and guidance; and the most splendid scenes of external prosperity will be ineffectual for our comfort, when these are withdrawn, and his gracious presence is removed from us forever. His presence, indeed, is every where: but how different are its aspects to the righteous, who respect his laws, and the perverse and disobedient, who insult his government! To the former, it is a source of light and power, to direct and maintain them in their way: to the latter, it is an object of disquietude and apprehension, if ever it comes across their thoughts. It will carry the righteous persevering and triumphant through the changes of life, and through the *valley of the shadow of death;* it will raise them from their rank *below the angels*, to the society and happiness of these glorious beings, and to eternal communion with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; to whom, &c.

A SERMON

BY THE RIGHT REV. DR. JOHN TILLOTSON,

LATE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

OF THE HAPPINESS OF A HEAVENLY CONVERSATION.

For our conversation is in heaven.—*Phil.* iii. 26.

For the understanding of which words, we need to look back no further than the eighteenth verse of this chapter, where the apostle, with great vehemency and passion, speaks of some among the Philippians, who indeed professed Christianity, but yet would do any thing to decline suffering for that profession: *There are many that walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are enemies to the cross of Christ;* they cannot endure to suffer with him, and for him; they are so sensual and wedded to this world, that they will do any thing to avoid persecution; so he describes them in the next verse, *whose end is destruction; whose God is their belly; whose glory is in their shame; who mind earthly things.* Now, in opposition to these sensual, earthly-minded men, the apostle gives us the character of the true Christians; they are such as mind heaven and another world, and prefer the hopes of that to all the interests of this life:—*our conversation is in heaven.* For the right understanding of which phrase,

be pleased to observe, that it is an allusion to a city or corporation, and to the privileges and manners of those who are free of it; and heaven is several times in Scripture represented to us under this notion of a city. It is said of Abraham, that *he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* Heb. ix. 10. It is called, likewise, *the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.* Heb. xiii. 22. And the same apostle, speaking of the uncertain condition of Christians in this world, says of them, that *here they have no continuing city, but look for one that is to come.* Heb. xiv. 14.

Now to this city the apostle alludes here in the text, when he says *our conversation is in heaven.* For the Greek word which is rendered conversation, may either signify the privilege of citizens, or their conversation and manners, or may take in both these. So that to have our conversation in heaven, does imply these two things:

First, the serious thoughts and considerations of heaven.

Secondly, the effect which those thoughts ought to have upon our lives.

I. The serious thoughts and considerations of heaven, that is, of the happy and glorious state of good men in another life; and concerning this, there are two things principally which offer themselves to our consideration:

First, the happiness of this state.

Secondly, the way and means whereby we way come to partake of this happiness.

First, we will consider the happiness of this state. But what, and how great, this happiness is, I am not able to represent to you. These things are yet, in a great measure, within the veil, and it does not now fully appear what we shall be. The Scriptures have revealed

so much in general concerning the reality and unspeakable felicities of this state, as may satisfy us for the present, and serve to inflame our desires after it, and to quicken our endeavours for the obtaining of it; as, namely, that it is incomparably beyond any happiness of this world; that it is very great; and that it is eternal: in a word, that it is far above any thing that we can now conceive or imagine.

1. It is incomparably beyond any happiness in this world. It is free from all those sharp and bitter ingredients which do abate and allay the felicities of this life. All the enjoyments of this world are mixed, and uncertain, and unsatisfying; nay, so far are they from giving us satisfaction, that the very sweetest of them are satiating and cloying.

None of the comforts of this life are pure and unmixed: there is something of vanity mingled with all our earthly enjoyments, and that causeth vexation of spirit. There is no sensual pleasure but is either purchased by some pain, or attended with it, or ends in it. A great estate is neither to be got without care, nor kept without fear, nor lost without trouble.

Dignity and greatness is troublesome almost to all mankind; it is commonly uneasy to them that have it; and it is usually hated and envied by those that have it not. Knowledge—that is one of the best and sweetest pleasures of human life; and yet if we may believe the experience of one who had as great a share of it as any of the sons of men ever had, he will tell us, that *this also is vexation of spirit; for in much wisdom there is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow.* Eccles. i. 17, 18.

Thus it is with all the things of this world; the best of them have a mixture of good and evil, of joy and sorrow, in them; but the happiness of the next life is free from allay and mixture. In the description of the new Jerusalem it is said, that *there shall be no more curse, and there shall be no night there* (Rev. xxii. 3, 5); nothing to embitter our blessings, or obscure our glory.

Heaven is the proper region of happiness; there only are pure joys and unmingled felicity.

But the enjoyments of this world, as they are mixed, so they are uncertain. So wavering and inconstant are they, that we can have no security of them; when we think ourselves to have the fastest hold of them, they slip out of our hands, we know not how. For this reason, Solomon very elegantly calls them things *that are not. Why wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make to themselves wings, and fly like an eagle towards heaven.* So fugitive are they, that, after all our endeavours to secure them, they may break loose from us, and in an instant vanish out of our sight: *riches make to themselves wings and fly away like an eagle:* intimating to us,that riches are often accessory to their own ruin. Many times the greatness of a man's estate, and nothing else, hath been the cause of the loss of it, and of taking away the life of the owner thereof. The fairness of some men's fortune hath been a temptation to those who have been more powerful, to ravish it from them; thus *riches make to themselves wings.* So that he that enjoys the greatest happiness of this world, does still want one happiness more, to secure to him for the future what he possesses for the present. But the happiness of heaven is a steady and constant light, fixed and unchangeable

as the fountain from whence it springs, *the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning;* and if the enjoyments of this life were certain, yet are they unsatisfying. This is the vanity of vanities, that every thing in this world can trouble us, but nothing can give us satisfaction. I know not how it is, but either we, or the things of this world, or both, are so fantastical, that we can neither be well with these things, nor well without them. If we be hungry, we are in pain; and if we eat to the full, we are uneasy. If we be poor, we think ourselves miserable; and when we come to be rich, we commonly really are so. If we are in a low condition, we fret and murmur; and if we chance to get up, and to be raised to greatness, we are many times further from contentment than we were before; so that we pursue the happiness of this world just as little children chase birds; when we think we are come very near it, and have it almost in our hands, it flies further from us than it was at first.

The happiness of the other life is not only incomparably beyond any happiness of this world (that, it may be, is no great commendation of it), but it is very great in itself. The happiness of heaven is usually in Scripture described to us by such pleasures as are manly and excellent, chaste and intellectual, infinitely more pure and refined than those of sense: and if the Scripture at any time descend to the metaphors of a feast, and a banquet, and a marriage, it is plainly by way of accommodation to our weakness, and condescension to our capacities. But the chief ingredients of this happiness, so far as the Scripture has thought fit to reveal it to us, are the perfections of our knowledge, and the height of our

love, and the perpetual society and friendship of all the blessed inhabitants of those glorious mansions; and the joyful concurrence of all these in cheerful expressions of gratitude, in the incessant praises and admiration of the Fountain and Author of all this happiness. And what can be more delightful than to have our understandings entertained with a clear sight of the best and most perfect Being, with the knowledge of all his works, and of the wise designs of his providence here in the world, than to live in the reviving presence of God, and to be continually attending upon Him whose favour is life, and whose glory is much more above that of any of the princes of this world, than the greatest of them is above the poorest worm?

The queen of Sheba thought Solomon's servants happy in having the opportunity, by standing continually before him, to hear his wisdom; but in the other world, it shall be a happiness to Solomon himself, and to the wisest and greatest persons that ever were in this world, to stand before this great King, to admire his wisdom and to behold his glory. Not that I imagine the happiness of heaven to consist in a perpetual gazing upon God, and in an idle contemplation of the glories of that place. For as by that blessed sight we shall be infinitely transported, so the Scripture tells us we shall be also transformed into the image of the divine perfection; we *shall see God, and we shall be like him;* and what greater happiness can there be than to be like the happiest and most perfect Being in the world? Besides, who can tell what employment God may have for us in the next life? We need not doubt but that he who is happiness itself, and hath promised to make us happy, can easily find out

such employments and delights for us in the other world, as will be proper and suitable to that state. But then, besides the improvement of knowledge, there shall be the most delightful exercise of love.

When we come to heaven, we shall enter into the society of the blessed angels, and *of the spirits of just men made perfect;* that is, freed from all those passions and infirmities which do now render the conversation, even of the best men, sometimes troublesome to each other. We shall then meet with all those excellent persons, those brave minds, those innocent and charitable souls, whom we have seen, and heard and read of in this world. There we shall meet with many of our dear relations and intimate friends, and perhaps with many of our enemies, to whom we shall then be perfectly reconciled, notwithstanding all the warm contests and peevish differences which we had with them in this world even about matters of religion. For heaven is a state of perfect love and friendship; there will be nothing but kindness and good-nature there, and all the prudent arts of endearment, and wise ways of rendering conversation mutually pleasant to one another. And what greater happiness can be imagined, than to converse freely with so many excellent persons, without any thing of folly or disguise, of jealousy or design upon one another? for there will be none of those vices and passions, of covetousness and ambition, of envy and hatred, of wrath and peevishness, which do now so much spoil the pleasure and disturb the quiet of mankind. All quarrels and contentions, schisms and divisions, will then be effectually hindered; not by force, but by love; not by compulsion, but by that charity which never fails; and all those controversies in re-

ligion, which are now so hotly agitated, will then be finally determined—not as we endeavour to end them now, by canons and decrees, but by a perfect knowledge, and convincing light. And when this blessed society is met together, and thus united by love, they shall all join in gratitude to their great patrons and benefactors, *to Him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb that was slain, to God even our Father, and to our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood!* And they shall sing everlasting songs of praise to God for all his works of wonder, for the effects of that infinite goodness, and admirable wisdom, and almighty power, which are clearly seen in the creation and government of the world, and all the creatures in it; particularly for his favours to mankind, for the benefit of their beings, for the comfort of their lives, and for all his merciful providences towards them in this world; but, above all, for the redemption of their souls by the death of his Son, for the free forgiveness of their sins, for the gracious assistance of his Holy Spirit, and for conducting them safely through all the snares and dangers, the troubles and temptations of this world, to the secure possession of that glory and happiness which then they shall be partakers of, and are bound to praise God for, to all eternity.

This, this, shall be the employment of the blessed spirits above; and these are the chief ingredients of our happiness which the Scripture mentions. And if there were no other, as there may be ten thousand more, for any thing I can tell; yet generous and virtuous minds will easily understand how great a pleasure there is in the improvement of our knowledge, and the exercise of

love, and in a grateful and perpetual acknowledgment of the greatest benefits that creatures are capable of receiving.

3. This happiness shall be eternal. And though this be but a circumstance, and does not enter into the nature of our happiness, yet it is so material a one, that all the felicities which heaven affords would be imperfect without it.

God hath so ordered things, that the vain and empty delights of this world should be temporary and transient, but that the great and substantial pleasures of the other world should be as lasting as they are excellent; for heaven, as it is an exceeding, so it is an eternal weight of glory. And lastly, this happiness is far above any thing that we can now conceive or imagine. It is so great, that it cannot now enter into the heart of man. In this imperfect state we are not capable of a full representation of those glories. We cannot now see God, and live. A full description of heaven, and of the pleasures of that state, would let in joys upon us too big for our narrow capacities, and too strong for weak mortality to bear. *We are now but children, and we speak as children, and understand and think as children*, concerning these things; but in the other state we shall grow up to be men, and then we shall put away these childish thoughts; *now we know but in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is imperfect shall be done away; now we see through a glass darkly, but then we shall see face to face; now we know in part, but then shall we know even as also we are known.* 1. Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 11, 12. No sooner shall we enter upon the joys of the other world, but our minds shall be rais-

ed to a strength and activity as much above that of the most knowing persons in this world, as the thoughts of the greatest philosopher and wisest man upon earth are above the thoughts of a child or a fool. No man's mind is now so well framed to understand any thing in this world, as our understandings shall then be fitted for that knowledge of God and of the things that belong to that state. In the mean time let us bless God, that he hath revealed so much of this happiness to us as is necessary to excite and encourage us to seek after it. The second thing to be considered concerning our future happiness, is the way and means whereby we may come to be made partakers of it; and that, in short, is by the constant and sincere endeavours of a holy life, in and through the mercies of God in our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is, indeed, the author of our salvation, but obedience is the condition of it; so the apostle tells us, that *Christ is the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him.* Heb. v. 1. It is the grace of God in the Gospel which brings or offers this salvation to us, but then it is by the *denying of ungodliness and worldly lusts, and by living soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present world,* that we are *to wait for the blessed hope.* Tit. ii. 11, 12. Our Saviour promises this happiness to the pure in heart: *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;* and elsewhere the Scripture doth exclude all others from any share or portion in this blessedness; so the Apostle assures us *that without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* Heb. xiii. 14. And holiness is not only a condition, but a necessary qualification for the happiness of the next life. This is the force of St. John's reasoning, *we shall be like him, for we shall see him.* To see

God, is to be happy; but unless we be like him, we cannot see him. The sight and presence of God himself would be no happiness to that man who is not like to God in the temper and disposition of his mind. And from hence the apostle infers, in the next verse, *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as He is pure.* So that if we live wicked lives, if we allow ourselves in the practice of any known sin, we interrupt our hopes of heaven, and render ourselves unfit for eternal life. By this means, we defeat all the designs of God's grace and mercy towards us, and salvation itself cannot save us if we make ourselves incapable of that happiness which God offers. Heaven is in Scripture called *an inheritance among them that are sanctified, and the inheritance of the saints in light;* so that it is not enough that this inheritance is promised to us, but we must be qualified and prepared for it, and *be made meet to be made partakers of it.* And this life is the time of our preparation for our future state. Our souls will continue forever what we make them in this world. Such a temper and disposition of mind as a man carries with him out of this life he shall retain in the next. 'Tis true, indeed, Heaven perfects those holy and virtuous dispositions which are begun here; but the other world alters no man as to his main state: *He that is filthy, will be filthy still; and he that is unrighteous, will be unrighteous still.*

To be happy is to enjoy what we desire, and to live with those whom we love. But there is nothing in heaven suitable to the desires and appetites of a wicked man. All the joys of that place, and the delights of that state,

are purely spiritual, and are only to be relished by those who have *purified themselves as God is pure.*

II. The *having our conversation in heaven*, does imply, likewise, the effect which those considerations ought to have upon our hearts and lives; as,

1. To convince us of the vanity of this world. God hath on purpose made this world troublesome and uneasy to us, that there might be no sufficient temptation to reasonable and considerate men to take them off from the care and thought of their future happiness; that God and heaven might have no rival here below; that there might be nothing in this world that might pretend to our affection, or court us with any advantage in comparison of everlasting life and glory. When we come to die, and eternity shall present itself to our serious and waking thoughts, then things shall put on another face, and those things which we valued so much in this life, will then appear to be nothing worth; but those things which we neglected, to be of infinite concernment to us, and worthy to have been the care and endeavour of our whole lives. And if we would consider these things in time, while the opportunities of life and health are before us, we might be convinced at a cheaper rate, and come to be satisfied of the vanity of this world before we despaired of the happiness of the other.

2. To make us very active and industrious, to be as good, and to do as much good as we can in this life, that so we may be qualified and disposed for the happiness of the next.

Men are usually very industrious for the things of this life, to be rich and great in this world: did we but value Heaven half as much as it deservers, we should

take infinitely more pains for that. So often as we consider the glories that are above, how does it accuse our sloth, and condemn our folly, that we are less concerned for our souls than most men are for their bodies; that we will not labour half so much for an eternal inheritance as men ordinarily do for these corruptible things? Let us remember that we are hastening apace to another world, and that our eternal happiness now lies at the stake. And how should it quicken our endeavours to have such a reward set before us, to have crowns and sceptres in our eyes? Would we but often represent to our minds the glorious things of another world, what fervours should we feel in our hearts? We should be all life, and spirit, and wing; and should do God's will, almost with the same reason and delight as the angels do, *who continually behold the face of their Father.* The consideration of heaven, and the firm persuasion of our future happiness, should actuate all the powers of our souls, and be continually inspiring us with new vigour in the ways of holiness and virtue. How should this thought swell our resolutions and confirm our purposes of obedience, that if we have our *fruit unto holiness, our end will be everlasting life?*

3. To mitigate and lighten the evils and afflictions of this life. It is no great matter how rough the way be, provided we be sure that it leads to happiness. The incomparably greater good of the next life will, to a wise and considerate man, weigh down all the evils of this. And the Scripture tells us, that there is no comparison between them. *The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us.* Rom. viii. 18.

The evils of this life afflict men more or less according as the soul is fortified with considerations proper to support us under them. When we consider that we have but a little while to be here, that we are upon our journey, travelling towards our heavenly country, where we shall meet with all the delights we can desire, it ought not to trouble us much to endure storms and foul ways, and to want many of those accommodations we might expect at home.

This is the common fate of travellers, and we must take things as we find them, and not look to have every thing just to our mind. These difficulties and inconveniences will shortly be over, and after a few days will be quite forgotten, and be to us as if they had never been. And when we are safely landed in our own country, with what pleasure shall we look back upon those boisterous and rough seas which we have escaped? The more troubles we have passed through, the kinder usage we shall find when come to our Father's house. So the apostle tells us, that *our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* When we come to heaven, our happiness shall then be as real as our miseries were here upon earth, and far greater and more lasting. And what great matter is it though we suffer awhile in this world, provided we escape the endless, insufferable torments of the next? and though we have not our good things in this life, if infinitely greater be reserved for us we shall receive them with interest, in the other.

Several of the evils and calamities of this life would be insufferable indeed, if there were nothing better to be hoped for hereafter. If this were true, Christians would

not only be of all men, but of all creatures, the most miserable; but our religion hath abundantly assured us to the contrary. And the assurance of this was that which made the primitive Christians to embrace sufferings with so much cheerfulness, *to glory in tribulation, and to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that in heaven they had a better and more enduring substance.* The seven brethren, in the history of the Maccabees, upon this persuasion, would *not accept deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.* The storm of stones which was poured upon St. Stephen, was no more to him than a common shower, when *he saw the heavens opened, and Jesus* (in whose cause he suffered) *standing on the right hand of God.*

4. To make us sincere in all our professions, words, and actions. Did men firmly believe the rewards of another world, their religion would not be only in show and pretence, but in life and reality; no man would put on a form of godliness that was destitute of the power of it; we should do nothing for the opinion of others, but all with regard to God and our own consciences; and be as curious of our thoughts and most retired actions, as if we were in an open theatre, and in the presence of the greatest assembly. For in the next life men shall not be rewarded for what they seemed to be, but for what they really were, in this world. Therefore, whatever we think, or speak, or do, we should always remember, that the day of revelation is coming, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, when all disguises shall be laid aside, and every one's mask shall be taken off, and all our actions and designs shall be brought upon the public stage, and exposed to the view of men and

angels. *There is nothing now hidden that shall not then be revealed, nor secret which shall not be made known.*

5. To arm us against the fears of death. Death is terrible to nature, and the terror of it is infinitely increased by the fearful apprehensions of what may follow it. But the comfortable hopes of a blessed immortality do powerfully relieve the fainting spirits of dying men, and are able to reconcile us to death, and in a great measure to take away the terror of it. I know that the thoughts of death are dismal even to good men, and we have never more need of comfort and encouragement than when we are conflicting with this last enemy; and there is no such comfortable consideration to a dying man, as the hopes of a happy eternity. He that looks upon death only as a passage to glory, may welcome the messengers of it as bringing him the best and most joyful news that ever came to him in his whole life; and no man can stay behind in this world with half the comfort that this man leaves it.

With what joy then should we think of those *great and glorious things which God hath prepared for them that love him, of that inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved for us in the heavens?*

How should we welcome the thoughts of that happy hour, when we shall make our escape out of these prisons, when we shall pass *out of this howling wilderness into the promised land;* when we shall be removed from all the troubles and temptations of a wicked and ill-natured world; when we shall be past all storms, and secured from all farther danger of shipwreck, and shall be safely landed in the regions of bliss and immortality? O blessed time! *when all tears shall be wiped from our eyes,*

and death and sorrow shall be no more; when mortality shall be swallowed up of life, and we shall enter upon the possession of all that happiness and glory which God hath promised, and our faith hath believed, and our hopes have raised us to the expectation of; when we shall be eased of all our pains, and resolved of all our doubts, and be purged from all our sins, and be freed from all our fears, and be happy beyond all our hopes, and have all this happiness secured to us beyond the power of time and change; when we shall know God and other things without study, and love him and one another without measure, and serve and praise him without weariness, and obey his will without the least reluctancy; and shall still be more and more delighted in the knowing, and loving, and praising, and obeying of God to all eternity. How should these thoughts affect our hearts, and what a mighty influence ought they to have upon our lives? The great disadvantage of the arguments fetched from another world, is this, that those things are at a great distance from us, and not sensible to us; and therefore are not apt to affect us so strongly, and to work so powerfully upon us.

Now to make amends for this disadvantage, we should often revive these considerations upon our minds, and inculcate upon ourselves the reality and certainty of these things, together with the infinite weight and importance of them. We should reason thus with ourselves: If good men shall be so unspeakably happy, and, consequently, wicked men so extremely miserable in another world; if these things be true, and will one day be found to be so, why should they not be to me as if already present?

The lively apprehensions of the nearness of death and eternity are apt to make men's thoughts more quick and piercing, and, according as we think ourselves prepared for our future state, to transport us with joy, or to amaze us with horror. For the soul that is fully satisfied of his future bliss, is already entered into heaven, has begun to take possession of glory, and has (as it were) his blessed Saviour in his arms, and may say, with old Simeon, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* But the thoughts of death must needs be very terrible to that man who is doubtful or despairing of his future condition. It would daunt the stoutest man that ever breathed, to look upon death, when he can see nothing but hell beyond it. When the apparition at Endor told Saul, *To-morrow thou and thy sons shall be with me;* these words struck him to the heart, and *he fell down to the ground, and there was no more strength left in him.* It is as certain that we shall die, as if an express messenger should come to every one of us, from the other world, to tell us so. Why should we not then always live as those that must die, and as those that hope to be happy after death? To have these apprehensions vigorous and lively upon our minds, this is *to have our conversation in heaven; from whence, also, we look for our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working of that mighty power whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself.*

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONSOLATION

IN THE

HOUR OF DOMESTIC DISTRESS.

A DISCOURSE READ TO THE AUTHOR'S FAMILY, SOON AFTER THE DEATH OF A BELOVED, AND MOST AFFECTIONATE WIFE, WHO DIED IN CHILDBED.

BY A LAYMAN.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following passages are the result of those moments in which the author's mind was suffering under the severest trial of human fortitude. They were suggested as the only present means of alleviating that weight of distress which pressed so heavily on his heart; and he had the consolation to find, that whilst the committing his thoughts to paper afforded a kind of mechanical relief to the immediate pressure of afflicting sensations, the directing them into that channel wherein the hope of every Christian flows, was productive of a degree of placid solace to his sorrow, which the condolence of friends, and all the usual modes of commiseration were totally incapable of effecting.

They are now published as a melancholy memorial of the modest virtues of her whose memory will ever be dear to the author, and whose loved image will never be effaced from his breast; nor will the heavy loss of her endearing society, and gentle manners ever cease to be sincerely regreted and greatly lamented by him.

Should the publication of these sentiments fortunately produce a surplus, it is his intention to apply that surplus to some charitable purpose; and if the perusal of them should prove in

the least consolatory to any one in similar circumstances, his great aim will be accomplished. He will then have the satisfaction of seeing the sad cause of his affliction producing what the open hand and benevolent heart of its valued object would have effected; *viz:* relief to the wants of the necessitous, and comfort to the anguish of wounded sensibility.

DISCOURSE.

The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!—*Job*, i. 21.

The words here made use of by holy Job, are not only most beautifully expressive of the ideas which gave them birth, but at the same time they present to our imagination such a picture of the exemplary patience and heavenly resignation of Job's mind, at the time of their utterance, as cannot fail to interest our feelings in his behalf, and to claim our earnest imitation, should the hand of the Almighty afflict us in a similar manner. The more we reflect on the happiness and splendour of his situation, prior to his afflictions, the more we shall reverence and admire his unfeigned submission to the Divine Will, under their grievous weight.

We are told that he was abundantly favoured with the temporal gifts of Providence. His possessions were ample, his situation elevated, his affairs prosperous, in every respect, and he had a numerous family of children; which last circumstance was looked upon, in those days, as a peculiar blessing. Hence we may easily conceive how lively must have been the sensations of this holy man's heart, towards his beneficent Creator, thus highly favoured with uninterrupted prosperity.—His

grateful soul, no doubt, poured forth incessantly its pious effusions to the *Giver of all goodness*, expressive of the high sense he entertained of such preeminent distinction; and though, by reflecting on the instability of human affairs, he might be prepared, in the midst of his felicity, for a small reverse of fortune, it is hardly probable that he should think his Heavenly Benefactor would at once withdraw *all* his favours. What, then, must have been the anguish of his mind, when one informed him, that the Sabeans had carried off all his herds; (for flocks and herds were then the riches of mankind) another, that all his sheep were destroyed by fire from heaven; another, that the Chaldeans had captured his camels; and, to crown the whole, a fourth told him, that all his children were unfortunately buried under the ruins of the house where they were feasting?—By these heavy disasters he was at once bereft of the wealth which made him respectable abroad, and of his beloved offspring, who formed his happiness at home. In one short day, from the envied height of affluence, was he plunged into cheerless poverty; and, from being the happy father of ten loved children, had he to encounter the gloomy prospect of passing the wane of life uncomforted by the endearments of filial affection, and of going down to the grave unlamented by any to whom he had given life. Yet under the dreadful affliction of these complicated misfortunes, what does he say?—"*Naked came* "*I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return* "*thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away;* "*blessed be the name of the Lord!*"

This striking picture of patience and resignation ought not only to excite our admiration, but to influence

our conduct. It was exhibited for our instruction; let us not pass by it unbenefited. It holds forth to our imitation that gratitude of heart, and that humility of mind, which the holy gospel inculcates in every page, as the leading features of the christian character; and happy, superlatively happy shall he be who shall faithfully copy so amiable an original!

The words which are prefixed to our present discourse naturally divide themselves into three distinct heads:

First, *The Lord gave.*—In these three words Job expresses his grateful acknowledgment of the goodness of God, in bestowing on him the many and great blessings he had heretofore enjoyed, though at that time he suffered most grievously under a sudden deprivation of them. This ought to lead us to contemplate with the most lively emotions every instance of the divine beneficence vouchsafed unto us; to render unfeigned thanks for the possession of it; and humbly to implore the continuance of it to us, so long as it may be consistent with our eternal welfare. And that every one of us does experience such instances of God's goodness towards his creatures no one will be hardy enough to deny, who considers seriously his situation and circumstances. Are we rich, or live with ease and comfort in the world, how ought we to adore the Divine Disposer of human events for thus blessing us with temporal distinctions; and how much ought those distinctions to inspire us with superior zeal for the service of God, in gratitude for the superior gifts bestowed on us! That we ought not to be proud of such superiority, nor value too much worldly benefits, is a truth which should never be out

of our minds; for *to whom much is given, of him much will be required*; and temporal advantages are but too often snares to our steps, and stumbling-blocks in our way to eternal life. The mind, elevated by prosperity, is but too apt to forget God, from whom that prosperity was derived; and to figure to itself ideas of self-importance, and dreams of sublunary bliss independent of, and perhaps incompatible with, that final state of real exaltation and permanent felicity which the soul hopes to enjoy, when all the pleasures of sense, and all the transitory joys of this life are passed away, like the fleeting cloud. Nor, indeed, do prosperous circumstances always produce even temporal happiness. Things are so situated in this world, that every good has its attendant evil, every pleasure its attendant pain; and it is owing to the goodness of the Almighty that many evils have their attendant good; and perhaps every evil, if not immediately is relatively so attended. Thus riches are generally acquired with restless cares, and are often possessed with an anxiety of heart very far from indicating that tranquillity in the possessor which the external decorations of rank and power would insinuate. On the other hand, poverty is not without its comforts. If the daily bread of the poor man be hardly earned by the sweat of his brow, he has the consolation of being exempt from the stings of disappointed ambition, and the selfish cravings of insatiable avarice. If his body be fatigued with the labour of procuring its support, his mind is at ease, and placidly enjoys the little conveniences which a gracious Providence has placed within his reach. If his limbs be weary, his sleep is the sounder and the more refreshing. Hence it is evident that poverty is not the

evil some people are led to imagine. It has its peculiar consolations and enjoyments, which the sons of sensuality and riot cannot taste, and thence becomes a positive good, for which our thanks are due to God, who is the kind giver of every good we enjoy; from the ill-estimated possessions of the rich and powerful, down to the really valuable comforts of the poor and needy; amongst the latter of which must be reckoned health, that greatest of sublunary blessings, without which affluence is but splendid misery, and indigence is poverty indeed. Let us, therefore, be thankful for every thing we possess, and consider it as the gift of the Almighty; for however large, however small our possessions may be, we must acknowledge that *the Lord gave;* and as they are undoubtedly derived from the goodness, they ought to be enjoyed by us with reverence, humility, and gratitude.

This leads us to the second consideration; namely, the loss of what we have been accustomed to regard as essential to our interest, or necessary to our happiness. In the most afflicting circumstance of this nature which, perhaps, ever happened to man, the patient and humble sufferer, whose words we have quoted, piously exclaims, *the Lord hath taken away!*

There is no doubt but the feelings of Job were as acute as those of other men, and that he did not receive the news of his unparalleled misfortunes without the most exquisite sensations; which is, indeed, confirmed to us by the impassioned manner and pathetic style of his replies to the severe remonstrances of his pretended comforters; yet the high sense he entertained of his duty to that God, whose justice he did not dare to impeach, prevailed on him to check the anguish of his

heart, even in this most afflicting visitation, and humbly to console himself with the reflection, that the Lord had only taken from him, in his wisdom, what he had before bestowed on him, in his goodness; and that as it was the Divine Will that he should suffer, it was highly incumbent on him to submit, without a murmur of disapprobation.

Here, then, is another lesson for our instruction. If we have before learnt to praise God for his goodness, in bestowing upon us and permitting us to enjoy whatever may be classed amongst the comforts or conveniences of life: and not less to thank him, with grateful hearts, for the enjoyment of that common, though most important of earthly blessings, corporeal health and mental tranquillity; we are here equally instructed how much it is our duty to submit, with patience and resignation, to his divine dispensations, even at the moment they wrest from us every thing estimable in the eyes of mankind, and shut out every ray of hope from our gloomy mansion. We are never to forget that *the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.*

When we receive good at his hands, do we refuse to enjoy it?—and when it pleaseth him to withdraw his gifts, who shall dare to remonstrate?—God bestows his favours gratuitously, without money and without price; we can neither claim them as our right, nor merit them by our services; if, then, our best thanks are due for what we receive, without title or desert, surely our patient submission is required when those gratuitous favours are withdrawn from us. If in our prosperity we exclaim, with grateful exultation, *the Lord gave!* let us be equal-

ly solicitous, in our adversity, patiently and humbly to reflect that it is *the Lord hath taken away!*

And this brings us to the latter part of the words we have selected, in which Job finishes the picture of his piety and humility, by exclaiming, with an ardor of devotion, which the highest sense of the justice as well as the goodness of God could alone inspire, *Blessed be the name of the Lord!* This passionate and devout exclamation was made, too, at the very moment that his mind was torn by the most agonizing afflictions, on the *all* which he had lost. But, as he says in another place, *shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil!*—In other words, shall God give us of this world's possessions, for our temporal happiness, and shall he not deprive us of them when they seem, to his unerring eye, inconsistent with our eternal felicity, or to answer some other wise purpose of his providence?—And this construction I think the passage will bear; for though the terms *good* and *evil*, made use of by Job in this place, have a temporal signification only, there is no doubt but he had in view, at the time of his thus ardently blessing God, that eternal retribution, which we so anxiously expect in another world, to heal the wounds of his heart, and make ample amends for the *evil* he suffered in this.

That the conferring of benefits should excite gratitude in the human breast, is nothing extraordinary; but that the deprivation of them, when once conferred, or, as Job expresses it, the *receiving of evil*, should cause in the heart emotions of admiration and praise, is not to be accounted for without a reference to some expectation of future good, which may counterbalance the pre-

sent evil. And this expectation in us, is the very reason why we are called upon to submit patiently to every dispensation of an All-wise Providence, however we may suffer thereby; for we cannot, without a shocking imputation on the divine goodness, suppose that God would afflict his creatures without cause or motive. If he brings temporal evils upon us, to wean us from the world, and to direct our minds to the higher concern of eternity, how ought we, with gratitude, to kiss the rod of affliction, and bless the hand which chastises us! But if we look further, and discover that such evils are intended as the punishment of our sins, to reclaim our hearts, and to awaken in us a sense of the dreadful danger of our situation, how much more ought we to pour out the most grateful effusions of our hearts towards God, for his great mercy, in thus substituting a temporal suffering for those offences, which, but for such gracious interposition, had probably brought upon us eternal perdition!

And these considerations, whilst they teach us to submit, with pious resignation, to the will of Providence, under positive evils, should also induce us to be very cautious not to create in our minds imaginary ones; such as being dissatisfied with our situations in life grasping at gratifications perhaps providentially set out of our reach; and repining that others appear to be happier or more prosperous than ourselves. To be contented with our lot in life is the first step towards the attainment of that happiness which is the grand aim of every human being: but though all concur in aiming at this delusive object, yet the means employed in the pursuit of it are as various as the tempers and dispositions of

its pursuers. Every thinking person can perceive that real happiness is not to be met with on this side the grave, and yet how anxiously do all of us exert ourselves, to the utmost of our power, in constant efforts to obtain it here, though every day's experience convinces us of the fruitlessness of our pursuit. The poor think it consists in being rich; the rich imagine it consists in magnificence or power; and both parties are miserably disappointed in the experiment. Nevertheless the desire of happiness is so imprinted on the mind of every man, that it is natural for him to yield to the impulse; and happy, indeed, is he who is reasonable enough to expect no more of it in the present life than is consistent with, and preparatory to, that which is the object of all our hopes in the life to come.

Human judgment, however, is so fallacious, and, human expectations so capricious, that, even with respect to temporal concerns, we are apt to call good evil, and evil good; and to shun with aversion what would be beneficial to us to possess, whilst we pursue with avidity the very thing which, obtained, would accomplish our destruction. If, then, we are so short-sighted on subjects which lie directly before us, how much ought we to suspect the propriety of the opinions we are too apt rashly to form, on those occasions wherein the good or evil which befalls us may have reference to the high concerns of a future state. It is scarcely to be doubted but every one who attentively reviews the transactions of his past life, may recollect circumstances of disappointment which have eventually turned out to his advantage, and flattering situations which have frustrated his hopes, and proved pernicious to his affairs.

These facts ought surely to make us judge with diffidence on the changes and chances of this checkered life, and particularly to apply, with humble hope, its losses and disappointments to that bright scene of things where no false appearances elude expectation, and the very desire of happiness is lost in the most ample possession of it. And this application is the more necessary, as, without it, the mind, under heavy afflictions, would be apt to sink into incurable despondency; whereas with the prospect before them that the keen sense of the troubles, the sorrows, the pains and anxieties of this world, will shortly be exchanged for the pure, uninterrupted joys of that heavenly kingdom *prepared for them from the beginning of the world*, the faithful followers of Christ are enabled to look upon human misery as a good rather than an evil; because it tends more than any thing to withdraw them from temporal, and to attach them more steadily to eternal things.

That Job, in the day of his distress, viewed his sufferings in this light, may, I think, be inferred, as well from the rebuke he gave to his rash wife, when she impiously advised him to *curse God and die*, as from the words we have been considering, which breathe such a firm reliance on the goodness and justice of the Almighty, and so ardent a zeal for his service, that they ought to be sincerely adopted by us all; so that under the pressure of every misfortune, in every loss, in every calamity of life, we may be enabled zealously to exclaim, *the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!*

Here I would fain make the application of these words to a recent and most distressful event, in which

all of us have been interested; some of us very deeply; but I, unfortunately, more than all. Yet why do I say *unfortunately!* Only to shew the weakness of human nature, and that precepts are more easily formed than practised.—When I consider the good things which God, in his beneficence, has bestowed on me; and when I look back on the long term of domestic happiness which his goodness has permitted me to enjoy, can I refrain to acknowledge, with unfeigned gratitude, that *the Lord gave?*—Far from me be the unworthy suggestion! And since it hath pleased the Almighty Donor to *take away* from me the choicest and best of those good things, the dearest and most valuable of my earthly blessings; and to change the sweets of conjugal felicity into bitterness and wo, my mind fails not to acquiesce in the justice of his dispensation, though it has thence suffered unspeakable anguish.

Of all human privations that which is occasioned by death is certainly the most awful and distressing; because the impossibility of reparation or restitution adds wonderful poignancy to the sorrow occasioned by the object lost; and the higher sense we entertain of the value of that object, the more keenly do we feel the separating stroke.

On the present melancholy occasion my heart has strongly evinced this truth. The high value of her whose heavy loss I cannot but severely feel, and shall not fail long to lament, was only known to those who happily were in the habits of intimacy with her; to enumerate, therefore, her virtues to us, who knew her intimately, might seem superfluous, but my mind loves to dwell on the interesting subject, and some good may result from bringing forward the amiable qualities she

possessed, not only in the estimation of my fond partiality, but, I trust, in the judgment of those who could look upon her with more discriminating eyes.

In every relation of life she displayed something worthy of our esteem or imitation. To her servants she was surely the mildest mistress that ever claimed obedience. The affability of her conversation, to those who served her with fidelity, inspired them with becoming confidence, whilst the interest she took in their concerns placed them upon the footing of humble friends, rather than direct dependants. Her commands had the appearance of requests; and the cheerful alacrity with which they were executed, best shewed the ascendancy she had over the hearts of those who obeyed her mild injunctions. If they were sorrowful, she pitied them; if they were sick, she administered to their relief.—To her children—O what an affectionate and indulgent mother! The tender offspring of her body were always considered so much a part of her very being, that if they suffered, her sympathetic bosom taught her to suffer with them; the least harsh word addressed to them she could not avoid applying to herself; and nothing could so readily ruffle the native evenness of her temper as any species of unkind treatment of these innocent objects of her maternal regard. Like the most timid and the mildest of animals, become bold and vindictive in defence of their young, she was ever their shield and defender, even against the guarded attacks of paternal authority; fearful lest a disposition less gentle than her own, should injure where it meant only to correct.—In the distress of every one she never failed to participate; the tale of sorrow ever called forth from her eye the tear of

sympathy; for her soul was commiseration itself.—To her friends and acquaintance, her conduct was affable, unaffected and sincere; being a stranger to dissimulation and deceit, and having an aversion to that flippancy of speech in which too many of the sex indulge, her actions, rather than her words, spoke the force of her attachment, and were the interpreters of her respect. Even those who merited her dislike, were only entitled to her silence.—To every one she was interesting, from her courteous and unassuming manners.—Considered in herself, her temper was mild and gentle; her heart was as free from pride, as it was charitable and humane; in amiable simplicity she was a very child: truth undisguised flowed from her tongue, and the ingenuous dictates of her artless mind directed all her actions. In this she was ever governed by the best of christian maxims —*do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you*; for in the whole of her intercourse with the world, she never failed of putting herself in the place of the person towards whom her actions were to be directed, and of regulating her conduct by the impulse of that imaginary transition. Nor was this so much the effect of reasoning on the occasion, as the pure, spontaneous result of that innate goodness of heart which was her distinguishing characteristic. That she had the failings and imperfections incident to human nature far be it from me to deny; but I trust, and ardently hope, that vice never had a moment's possession of her undesigning bosom.—Perfection is not the portion of humanity; and where is the light which admits no shade? Even the glorious luminary which gives light to the world is not exempt from spots, though they are undiscoverable to

common observation. Let us, then, endeavour to imitate the estimable qualities we have seen her eminently possessing, and wherever a scrutinizing eye can discover an obscuring spot, let us blot it out with the tear of pity; humbly beseeching God to pardon it in her, through the merits of our Redeemer, and to give us all the blessing of his grace, sufficient to enable us to avoid the like; hence may we profit by the knowledge of our own unworthiness, and learn, from the known imperfection of human nature, that nothing is truly valuable but what is derived from God.

In addition to this endearing picture of her whom the dark curtain of death has enshrouded, and hid from our sight; whose virtues the invaluable experience of seventeen years has so impressed on my mind as never to be effaced; I would delineate her character as a wife. But in this peculiar relation my feelings are too painfully interested to attempt a description; for *what she was to me* is not to be described. St. Paul says, *wives, submit yourselves to your husbands;* a doctrine too harsh, I fear, to be brooked by every one; but she whom I deplore, had no need of such an injunction; for never was deference and obedience more sweetly tempered with complacency and affection! It would have been impious not to have considered her as the choicest gift of heaven; and it would have been base and vile not to have valued, esteemed, and honoured her, agreeably to that consideration. She was to me, indeed, every thing to which terms expressive of high estimation, disinterested friendship, and virtuous love could be applied. If the loveliness of her person first attracted my attention, and inspired my heart with the tenderest regard, the sweetness of her disposition, the unaffected simplicity

of her manners, and the unfeigned warmth of her attachment so closely drew the silken cords of conjugal affection, that our souls grew together, as it were, and formed but *one*. In all the momentous concerns of life they were so perfectly congenial that, like well-tuned instruments, they were always in unison. Time, instead of impairing, only served to strengthen the bonds of our union; and as the fervour of youthful endearments subsided, the steady glow of solid friendship so forcibly succeeded, that it promised its precious fruits to the very winter of old age. She was, in every sense, the *friend* as well as the wife of my bosom. If I was in affliction she alleviated my sorrows, by kindly and truly sharing them; if my heart rejoiced, her's so exulted in the common joy, that it seemed doubled to my imagination, even as the mirror doubles, by reflexion, the object presented to it. In short, our minds, under every impression, were so mutually the support of each other, and so mutually inclined, on every occasion, to converge towards that support, that though they were strengthened in their union, they were individually weakened; and might be considered as a well-formed arch, firm whilst entire, but easily tumbled into ruin, if the keystone be removed, or the foundation of either side be undermined.

This alas! has been but too strongly exemplified in the present case, which is but too faithful a portrait of the instability and insecurity of human bliss. Whilst my fond imagination was rich in the possession of present, and busy in projecting schemes of future felicity, whilst I contemplated with inexpressible delight her who was the chief cause of the one, and the principal object

of the other; behold the hand of Death hath dashed the cup of happiness from my lips, and blasted all my sanguine hopes at once!

Deprived thus of so much excellence, the cause and object of so much happiness, what a loss is mine! Though different in kind, surely not less in degree than that which Job experienced. He lost all, except his wife; and I lost all, in losing mine; for flocks, and herds, and wordly possessions would have been readily relinquished to have preserved her who, in my experienced estimation, was so richly worth them all, had their amount been magnified in every possible degree. These being retrievable losses, her social converse would have afforded me the truest consolation under the deprivation of them, and aided my soul in looking forward to brighter prospects. But it was the will of Heaven that I should suffer this affliction; and if I have thought it equal in magnitude to that of the holy man we have before quoted, I pray God that my resignation may also be equal; and in the uncertainty of what high import this my present calamity may be to the future felicity of both, may my ill-judging mind and froward passions be taught to acquiesce, whilst my tongue confirms my submission, with—*Blessed be the name of the Lord!*

If, however, excessive grief, under such temporal losses as are incident to human nature, be offensive to the Almighty, as tending to arraign the justice of his decrees, yet the mild tears of wounded sensibility, the sorrowful effusions of the swoln heart, cannot but be an acceptable sacrifice on the altar of humanity, and surely will not be disapproved by a merciful God, *who despises not the sighing of a contrite heart, nor the desire of such*

as be sorrowful. The pathetic lamentation of David, for his beloved son Absolam, is certainly not recorded, in holy writ, in terms of reproach; though the object was unworthy that display of his fine feelings, and the force of his paternal affection. Nevertheless, this exquisite sorrow ought ever to be tempered by reason, aided by religion. To such an appeal, on the present trying occasion, I would have recourse; and persuade myself that my loss is but temporary. I would imagine her who has been thus untimely snatched from me, to be merely gone on a journey; or at most gone to fix her residence in another and a better country; whither I hope to follow, and to live again with her in a state of uninterrupted and never-ending felicity, such as *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.* I would fain figure to myself that precious body which lately, in an inexpressible agony of mind, I beheld stretched out, breathless and deadly pale, in the coffin; and whose clay-cold lips I pressed, for the last time, ere the lid closed her forever from mortal sight; that body would I fain suppose springing from the tomb, at the call of her Redeemer, to the enjoyment of new life, fresh with renovated strength, and blooming in immortal youth. What a rich compensation for present griefs, would be the ineffable joys of meeting her again in such a state! The supposition is highly pleasing and consolatory; the more so as being strictly analogous to the real circumstances of the case. The more I reflect on it, the more I feel the force of the allusion, and am anxious to submit with becoming fortitude. But it is an arduous task, to a heart smarting under the anguish of so recent and so deep a wound. The steady eye of faith, indeed,

sees the high probability that the cause of my lamentation has been the immediate advantage of her, the loss of whom has so deeply afflicted me; and, through the mercy of God, will be my eventual gain; that whilst my heart is venting its unavailing sorrows, her loved spirit happily inherits the promises; blest, ever blest, in the presence of her God, and the favour of her divine Redeemer. But the swoln eye of over-weening passion, hood-winked by self-love, masked under the appearance of social affection, looks only to the present apparent evil, the future good lying far beyond its contracted view. Even boasted Reason, arguing from the poignancy of actual sensations, enlists under her banner, and tends to set at distance the resulting benefit. The mind will suffer under the severing stroke, and call up arguments to justify its bitterest griefs. Religion only can alleviate her anguish, heal her wounds, and pour the balm of consolation over her afflictions.

This suggests to me the reflection, that though the loved object of my plighted faith was suddenly cut off in the prime of life, like the vernal flower nipt by untimely frost, the gain is greatly her's; inasmuch as I trust in God that she is thence an earlier inhabitant of the blissful mansions of eternal repose; and that this awful event, which has presented to me the aspect of the most dreadful calamity, may have been brought about by the mercy of the Almighty, to rouse my heart from its fond lethargy, and frail dependance on a perishable creature; that feeling, as I have keenly done, the insecurity of human happiness, I might apply myself more seriously to the means of obtaining that perfect happiness which nothing can interrupt, and nothing can terminate.

God grant that we may all make this application with effect! The lesson of adversity is, indeed, hard to learn, but it is very profitable to the student, when well understood. The mind grows callous in the continued prosperity of the world, relies too much upon its own powers, and seeks too much its immediate gratification, forgetful of the beneficent hand which *gave*, and the Almighty Power which so soon can *take away*. Adversity, on the contrary, softens the heart, humbles its proud pretensions, and disposes it to an acknowledgment of its weakness, and the vanity of its propensities. In such a situation as this, who does not see the mercy of the Omnipotent shine through the cloud of temporal affliction?—The withdrawing from our possession the object which engrosses so much of our attention, as to estrange us from the service of God, and to make the creature the rival of the Creator, is only the merciful interposition of Divine Providence, to convince our stubborn and incredulous hearts of the instability of temporal good, to set before our eyes the sad proofs of the weakness and frailty of human nature, and to shew us how vain and unsatisfactory are all the pleasures of sense, and how empty and illusory are even the purest desires of the human breast, which embrace not objects beyond the present transitory scene of things.

In this state of humiliation, the mind, irreparably deprived of that which it has long been accustomed to consider as its best comfort and support, naturally looks round for a substitute; for something whereon to build new expectations, or which may administer consolation, and become a barrier against the terrors of despondency, which is too often the result of indulging ideas des-

titute of Hope, the only resource of the wretched. Happily for the sufferings of mankind, religion points out the ample and invaluable substitute; directs us to the *rock of ages* for the firm, immovable foundation on which our new desires must be erected, in order to ensure us permanent and uninterrupted enjoyment; and teaches us to aim at the attainment of that great and substantial good, which our Blessed Saviour has promised to those who ask it in his name, even the participation of the kingdom of heaven. This is the sovereign balm which the physician of our souls has prepared for human wo; and every one is invited to experience its efficacy. *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden*, says he, *and I will give you rest.*—To him, then, let us direct our ardent supplications, in every situation of life; and consider it as the greatest blessing, that under the severest visitations of God we are not left hopeless; but can lift up our gloomy thoughts, with confidence, from the dark chambers of cheerless melancholy, to the bright mansions of the fountain of light; and exchange an earthly and perishable possession, for a celestial and everlasting treasure.

Lastly, that we may apply every circumstance attending the subject before us to our own immediate edification, let us reflect on the suddenness of the catastrophe which has been the cause of our present sorrow. But a few short days before the fatal blow was struck, she, whose memory will be ever dear to us, enjoyed her usual good health; and the situation which then succeeded, though delicate and dangerous, by not being uncommon was far from being hopeless. Even the day preceding that of her dissolution began in cheering smiles. An un-

expected ray of hope beamed upon us, and her eye brightened with the flattering prospect of returning strength; but, alas! it was only to close in death. The delusion was momentary. It was but the last bright glare of an expiring taper. The grim conqueror had raised his hand, and levelled his dart with unerring aim. Neither her own strength of years, nor the power of medicine, nor the fervent prayers my agitated soul addressed to the Omnipotent, were able to avert the dreadful stroke. The awful *fiat* was given, and mocked all human exertions to preserve her valued life.

Let us think seriously of this, and tremble for ourselves. To be so suddenly snatched from the bosom of affectionate friends, and dearest relatives; to be, with so short a warning, hurried from the soft blandishments of social life, however innocent, into the dread presence of the Almighty, is certainly a fearful thing. And if it was so in the present case, how terrible must it be to one less exemplary in conduct, and less observant of moral and religious duties!

Surely this consideration alone will be sufficient to put us on our guard, and to urge us not to delay a moment the important business of examining our hearts, and of asking ourselves the question, what would become of our immortal souls should *we* be so unexpectedly summoned to meet our God?—O! it is a momentous concern! For however healthful, however young, however robust we may be, we are nevertheless certain that we *must* die. Nor can we form the least conjecture of the time when the awful summons will arrive. A thousand trivial accidents are capable of cutting short the thread of life; and we who appear so perfectly secure at present,

may, ere to-morrow's dawn, be stretched out upon the bed of death. As a melancholy confirmation how very small a matter, in the hand of the Almighty, is able to precipitate us into the grave, be it remembered that a mere alarm, without the least external violence, was the eventual cause of these our lamentations. Nor let us ever forget that neither that health, that youth, that strength which seems to promise such length of days, is able to shield us a single moment from the attacks of the king of terrors; who, with apparent capriciousness, often passes by the weak, the sickly, and the aged, to level with the dust the strong, the healthy, and the young. Let us, then, seriously and immediately set about preparing ourselves, to meet this dreadful destroyer of mankind; and as it is impossible for us to ward off from the body his fatal blows, let us be provided with the happy means of rendering them innoxious to our souls. Let us remember that *as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.* What a delightful consolation is this, under the tremendous certainty of death! Let us, therefore, sedulously seek this sovereign consolation. Let us repose our anxious hopes of succour and defence on his Almighty arm, who is able to raise us from the gloomy sepulchre, to everlasting life. In order to which, let us be mindful to be so prepared, by supplication and prayer, by the unfeigned integrity of our hearts, and by a firm reliance on the efficacy of our Saviour's sufferings and death, that we may be enabled to look upon the universal destroyer with composure, and consider him only as the means employed by Providence of translating us from a world teeming with cares and disquiets; where the little unsubstantial good we find, is abundant-

ly counterbalanced by the load of solid evils which mankind is doomed to bear; and of placing us in the regions of uninterrupted repose, and never-ending felicity; where, under the protection of the captain of our salvation, we shall experience the inexpressible delight of being again united to our dear departed friends; of again tasting the sweets of their improved society; happy, transcendently happy, in the certainty that we shall never more feel the pang of separation.

Considering in this light the painful loss of those who have been nearest to our hearts, and most necessary to our happiness, their death, at first so afflicting to our sensibility, becomes a blessing to our souls; pointing out to us the necessity of transferring our affections from the delusive shadow to the solid substance; of relinquishing the vain expectation of laying up treasures on earth, for the more rational desire of securing them in heaven, *where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and where thieves cannot break through and steal:* for *where the treasure is, there will the heart be.*

Since, then, we ourselves have lost an earthly treasure of no common value, let us be thankful to God for the time we have happily enjoyed it; and earnestly looking forward towards the attainment of an heavenly and invaluable one, the rich compensation we are graciously taught to expect, let us cordially unite with Job, and say —*the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!*

CONSOLATIONS FOR THE AFFLICTED

UNDER THE LOSS OF FRIENDS.

BY WILLIAM DODD, D. D.

CONSOLATIONS DRAWN FROM CONSIDERATIONS RESPECTING GOD.

WHAT a scene of trial and trouble is the present! from what various quarters do the arrows of affliction fly to the human heart! doubts and cares and fears oppress our minds! diseases and pain torment our bodies! —*friends* die,—our dearest friends die,—and a sad breach is thus made in our happiness!—This is a source of deep distress; it calls for all our pity and for all our aid; and blessed be God, such is our divine religion, that it presents comfort to every care, and hath balm to bestow on every wound! As therefore we have endeavoured to suggest the proper arguments of comfort to the distrest in mind and body, let us now proceed to offer all possible relief to such as are distrest in estate or condition: and first to those who mourn the loss of beloved and deceased friends.

The great Author of our being hath, for wise and good ends, so constituted our nature, that the social affections operate with peculiar force upon our minds, and sway us almost irresistibly. It cannot therefore be supposed, when the just and proper objects of such afflictions are taken from us, that grief is criminal, that sorrow is wholly forbidden us. Impossibles can never be

criminal, can never be forbidden; and it is impossible to withhold the gushing tear, to stop the deep and melancholy sigh, to be void of tender and affectionate feeling, when the friend, dear as our own soul, when the beloved parent, when the valuable husband or wife, when the child of our bosom, and of our hopes, are taken, forever taken from our embraces, and lodged in the cold bowels of the comfortless grave.—The dispositions of men are also so various, that the same affliction will produce very different effects on different minds; that which shall melt down one person will hardly warm another. Where there is a predominance of the softer passions, every bowel shall move within them, and like the sensitive plant, they shrink in, and are affected with the smallest touch. Some natures are even *painfully* tender; to such therefore we must allow a larger liberty in sorrow, as they have a more feeling sense of grief.—The occasions of sorrow too may justify a greater degree of it; some losses are so truly distressful, some cases so extremely pitiable, that one cannot deny to the sufferer some indulgence in grief. Who can blame the widow,—nay, who can fail to weep with her,—when she laments, in all the bitterness of anguish, that fatal stroke which separates from her and her little orphans, the husband of her heart, the father, the friend, the support!

Grief, therefore, tender grief, is by no means forbidden or blameable; thus far we plead in its behalf. St. Paul, when he advises us not *to sorrow, as others who have no hope*, plainly allows us *to sorrow*. He does not say, I would have you not sorrow at all,—but *not as those*, &c. Christianity would regulate, not totally suppress our grief. But though grace doth not destroy; it

refines nature; though it doth not extinguish the affections and passions, yet it rectifies and moderates them. To be altogether unconcerned is unnatural, for the most part is impossible; to be too much concerned is unchristian: they are both hurtful extremes to any soil, to have no water at all, or to have it overflow and drown the whole country.*

While then we plead for moderate, we would offer arguments against immoderate sorrow; and sorrow may then truly be said to be *immoderate*, when it makes us peevish and passionate, irreconcilable to, and out of humour with all our other blessings, because God hath been pleased to take away one;—when it unfits us for the duties of religion, and the business of life. "He is a miserable man indeed, says one,† who is afflicted and cannot or will not pray;"—when we are so much taken up with our own as to attend to the sorrows of nobody else;—when we are regardless of God's design in our affliction, of the lessons we should learn from his correcting stroke:—when we refuse to be comforted, and exceed both in time and measure;—when our spirits are soured, and we murmur and entertain hard thoughts of God;—and lastly, it is immoderate when we suffer it to prey upon our *health*. Sometimes, indeed, sorrow kills entirely, and as effectually, as if a man was shot through the heart; sometimes it operates more gradually, but then it does its business, as surely as a slow and eating poison. For the food seldom nourishes which is mingled with tears; the air refresheth not, the faculties

* See *Grosvenor's* Holy Mourner, from which we have taken very liberally, as we know no book more worthy on the subject.

† Old Mr. *Dod's* sayings.

of nature perform not their functions amidst immoderate and indulged grief;—and the end is a broken heart! *By sorrow of heart the spirit is broken*, says the wise man; and we sometimes read in the bills of mortality, this affecting article,—*Died of grief;*—an article which would be much larger and oftener inserted, if all who died of grief were to be distinguished: for very many are the diseases which are the natural issue of immoderate sorrow! How offensive in the sight of God such sorrow must be, we shall clearly discern from the motives to submission and comfort, which I now proceed to offer, and which may be derived from considerations that either respect, 1. God; 2. Our deceased friends; 3. Our own selves; or 4. Others about us.

1. In the first place then immoderate grief for the loss of friends is highly unreasonable, if we consider who it is *that taketh away*. It was sufficient to stop the torrent of old *Eli's* grief, amidst the loss of his children and the total extinction of his house, when he recollected the hand inflicting the heavy blow, *It is the Lord*, said the resigned old man, *let him do what seemeth him good.*

Consider only, that God is our great and uncontrolable Sovereign, who hath an absolute right and property in us and all that we have; and the thought must teach submission. Again, consider his superlative Majesty and unspeakable excellence, and it must strike us dumb with the profoundest humility! *Shall not his excellency make thee afraid*, says the sacred writer; his excellency, who dwells in light unapproachable, before whom angels veil their faces.—Wilt thou lift up thy bold front against him, and charge that glory with shame, that brightness with a spot, that wisdom with folly, and

that justice of his with any iniquity? If such poor children of the dust, as we, would contemplate the unutterable greatness and glory of the Lord of life and death, we should receive with greater submission, any chastening dispensations from him.

Consider again his infinite perfections; he is infinitely wise and cannot err; infinitely powerful and cannot be resisted; infinitely holy and cannot behold iniquity without abhorrence; infinitely good and can do no evil; and he is infallible truth itself, so that he cannot falsify his word.—If it were possible to take the management of matters out of his hands into our own, it would be the best way for us to replace them again in the hands of God. It is he to whose will all the course of nature besides uniformly complies; why then should not we? And when we read that Christ himself said, *I am come to do thy will, O God;* and, *Father, not as I will but as thou wilt;* who are we that we should pretend to speak any other language?

After the perfections of God consider the *relations* in which he stands to us; he made the human will! Shall he not give laws to his own creature? Did he form this hand to strike at himself? this breath, this tongue, to speak against him;—did he make us and freely give us *all* things, that we should blaspheme him, when he is pleased to withdraw some of them! oh, strange impiety!—but, as dependant creatures, do we not live, and move, and have our being in him? as we are expectant creatures, is it the way to obtain our will of him, to deny him the homage and submission of our own wills?—as we are sinful creatures, have we not guilt enough upon us already? shall we swell the account and increase

our misery?—As we are accountable creatures, he is our Judge; as we are recoverable creatures, he is our Saviour; and can we be displeased with any of his methods towards making all these ideas concur to our salvation? To be redeemed from the tyranny of our own wills and irregular appetites, is no small part of the redemption by Jesus Christ. Did he give himself up to death for us, and shall we think it too much to give up our wills to him?—Shall the Redeemed dispute the orders of the Redeemer? shall servants dispute the will of their master; or subjects say to such a king, *what dost thou?*—We are his friends only upon the term of doing whatsoever he commands us;—and if, under the relation of children, we go to him as our Father who is in heaven: certainly we ought, as dutiful children, ever to add, *Father, thy will be done.*

To the consideration of the *relations* which God bears to us, we may add, that whether *we submit* or not, his will must and shall be done; and therefore it is far better and wiser for us to have the blessing and comfort of a dutiful submission, than to murmur under a fretful and unprofitable compulsion to it. Nay, and in every loss, we may and ought to reflect how much further God might have gone with us, depriving us of all our comforts as well as part of them; he might have given up our souls to terror, our bodies to disease, our affairs to confusion. It behoves us therefore to be thankful, that he hath only afflicted thus far, and that with our friends he hath not taken away all things beside. *David*, in his pathetic reply on the death of his child, shews us the absurdity of unreasonable grief, and the folly of not submitting to the will of God which is irreversible;

While the Child was yet alive, said he, *I fasted and wept; for I said, who can tell whether God will be gracious to me that the child may live?* the most humble submission allows the use of all proper means, and of the most fervent application to God in prayer; *But*, he goes on, *now that he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*

Moreover, a well-grounded persuasion of God's exact and particular providence is a strong consolation amidst the loss of our friends, if there were no providence we should want one of the best antidotes against the fears of what is to come, and the sorrows for what is past; for (as bishop *Patrick* observes,) all the care would then lie upon ourselves, and that would be far too much for us; but when a man thinks of Infinite Wisdom and Power governing all things, he cannot fail to be submissive; for God disposes of all things, not only as absolute Lord, but as a loving Father, that we might be sensible no less of his goodness than of his power. It is distrust of God to be too much troubled about what is to come; it is impatience against God to fret at what is present; and it is anger at him to be too much concerned for what is past.—Such a frame of spirits finds fault with his wisdom, blames his goodness, depresses his power, reprehends his faithfulness; and therefore is highly sinful and speedily to be amended.

The wise and great ends he is advancing to his own glory, and our good, is another motive to submission. God hath as much right to use us to the purposes of his own glory whether perceived by us or not, as we have to use any instrument in our house, or to employ any of our servants without acquainting them

with our purposes. Had not *Abraham*, *Joseph*, *Job*, and others been used by God much otherwise than according to their natural will, we had lost the benefit of the finest instances of submission, and they the blessing of the fullest reward. "I see God will have *all* my heart, and he shall have it," was a fine reflection made by a lady, when news was brought of two children drowned, whom she tenderly loved—O Lord, we are the clay and thou the potter; behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are we in thine!

But be it remembered, that whatsoever you lose you cannot be miserable, while you have this God to be your God and portion; the God who made the creatures we are so fond of, who gave them all the loveliness and perfections we so much admire, and hath, without doubt, in himself all that which he gave and infinitely more. How does it sound to say, "I am undone, for I have nothing but God left!" Surely God can fill up the room of any departed creature, though the whole world cannot fill up the room of a departed God! to lose a creature and find a God, has been an happy exchange to some, whose losses have brought them to know God and themselves; God who will eternally be more to us than he can ever take from us!

Let us also observe, that as submission to the will of an All-wise Father is the most reasonable duty of dependant creatures, so it is the most acceptable sacrifice to God, and the highest duty of Christianity; and one whose deficiency can be atoned by no religious services whatever; though we offer ten thousand sacrifices, or give the fruit of our body for the sin of our soul; all this would be vain without resignation to the Divine Will: all

the practices of religion without it, are mere formality, hypocrisy and pretence. "Do you see how that person employs himself in the offices of devotion? can any one be more assiduous in hearing and reading, in prayer and sacraments?—you shall soon perceive of how little worth all this external service is; lo! God puts forth his hand and takes away the delight of his eyes with a stroke; and presently the God, which, he seemed to adore with so much resignation, can hardly have a good word or a good thought, can hardly be allowed to be wise and good and just, or any thing but a severe and hard master. He not only mourns, but he pines and consumes, and rages against God; God and his heaven are cyphers now in comparison of the creature, to which yet that God hath done no harm, but only removed for purposes in which this man himself will rejoice, when he comes to know them.

Vainly indeed do you call God Most High, and quickly something else appears higher in your esteem; your husband, your child, your wife, your friend; you call him Most Glorious, and yet glory more in something else; you compliment him with the title of Faithful and True, but while he sees that you will not trust him in the way of your duty, that you will not take his word in a promise for a work of piety to God, or charity to man, he esteems himself flattered. And be sure that all pretences to serve and honour him are vain and fruitless, can neither be acceptable to him nor profitable to you, if your heart deny him the tribute of humble resignation; if you retain the pride of self-will, and are not ready cheerfully to receive whatever he shall think fit to ordain. The contrary behaviour impugns his wisdom, goodness, power and truth.

From these then, and the like considerations, which respect God, we may learn the great duty of submission, as well as derive arguments of comfort, when he is pleased to take away any of our friends from us; *he*, who is the absolute Lord and Sovereign of all his creatures, whose greatness and majesty are uncontrolable, whose perfections, his truth, wisdom, goodness are infinite, and who, from the relations which he bears to us, necessarily requires perfect submission to his will; which must and shall be done, whether we submit to it or not. The reflection,—that his particular providence ruleth and directeth all events; that all events are designed by him to promote our good and his glory; that no events, however melancholy, can deprive us of him and his mercies, if we be not wanting in our duty;—must give us consolation under the loss of our dearest friends; while a remembrance of the great importance of submission and resignation must render every sincere soul desirous of attaining this temper, which is no less happy in itself than it is pleasing to God; no less conducive to our present tranquillity, than to our future glory!

CONSOLATIONS UNDER THE LOSS OF FRIENDS, DRAWN FROM CONSIDERATIONS RESPECTING THOSE FRIENDS, THEMSELVES.

From these considerations respecting God, we proceed to such as regard our departed friends themselves. God who gave them to us, hath been pleased to re-demand his own gift, and to take them away from us! why should we not say, *Blessed be the name of the Lord!* blessed be his name for vouchsafing them to us so long.

He had a property in them before we had any; they were his before they were our's; now they are his eternally.—And, oh! say, would you have your beloved friends immortal here, only to please you? would you have them live, though weary of life, and stay below, though longing to be gone? would you have them in misery, though fit for happiness? would you have them kept amidst the troubles of life, the pains of sickness, the infirmities of age; or, at the very best, in the vain insipid repetition of the same round of things, only to prevent a vacancy in your amusements and delights? *Is this thy kindness to thy friend?* Oh, surely, thou lovest thyself more than thy friend, or thou wouldst rejoice that he is delivered from all the evils of mortality!

Besides, we know the irreversible condition of humanity. A parting time must come; why then not this? If the time of parting with our friends were left to our choice, it would greatly increase our confusion! We know that we enjoy our friends only upon a very frail and uncertain tenure; why then should we not endeavour to reconcile ourselves to that necessary separation, which, indeed, is not the total loss, is not the utter extinction of our friends. Blessed be God, Christ hath brought life and immortality to light; and we are assured, that our dear friends do not cease from existing, they only exist in a different state and manner; a different and a far more happy;—for, though absent from us, they are present with the Lord; entered into joy unspeakable and full of glory! why then any immoderate grief? it can neither be profitable to us nor to them; it may do us much hurt, it can do them no good; it may weaken our bodies and prejudice our health; it may sadden our spirits, deprive

us of the comforts, and indispose us for the duties of life! and what advantage can there be derived from so costly a sacrifice to their memory! do they need, can they be pleased with our tears, who have forever taken leave of weeping themselves, and have such infinite cause for joy! could your cries call back the departed spirit, and awaken the clay-cold body into life; could you water the plant with tears till it revived, there might be some excuse for the abundance of your sorrow; but there are no *Elijahs* now who may stretch themselves upon the breathless corpse and bring back its departed soul. *Wherefore should we weep? can we bring them back again,—we shall go to them, but they shall not return to us.*

And, can it be, would you have them return? do you lament their felicity? are you grieved for their happiness? would you wish to bring them back again? would you wish to have your dear child, your affectionate parent, your faithful consort, your valuable relation, now safely landed in the haven of eternal rest, would you wish to have them again placed on the uncertain shore of this life, and subjected to all its temptations and difficulties? would you have them walk over the precipice once more, fight the dangerous battle over again, again run the arduous race, be tempted, sin, and suffer again? would you have them indeed return for your gratification, from that holy place to this place of sin, from joy to trouble, from rest and peace to new vexations? their sentiments are different, their affections raised and ennobled, and, as well as they loved us, they would not come back to us for all the universe; and yet, as well as we loved them, we cannot, for our un-

reasonable grief, wish them joy of their new elevation and dignity!—Oh! let us struggle against these unworthy apprehensions, and congratulate ourselves, that we have already friends, friends dear as our own souls, friends for whom we could well have been content to die, that we have such already in the kingdom of God, and waiting to welcome us to that blessed and better country!

There is the joy, there is the grand source of consolation under the loss of friends,—we shall meet again! They are delivered from their trial while we are left behind a few weary years longer; and behold, the time of our departure also cometh, when we shall follow our friends, and be forever with them and with the Lord! Forever! comfortable truth, never more to hang over the dying bed, to catch the last mournful farewell, to hear the sad agonizing, heart-rending groan! We shall meet, meet with an inexpressible reciprocation of endearing love and multiplied joy, to find ourselves all thus together, after our parting sorrows,—together not in the world of trial, trouble and sin,—but in a place where all things and persons that are any ways offensive, shall be totally removed! No falseness or rancour, no partiality or mistake, no prejudice or infirmity, no malice or envy, no passion or pride shall ever discompose us there, nor aught be found to molest or hinder the heavenly pleasure circulating through every happy heart and dwelling upon every joyful face and thankful tongue!

Let us elevate our souls to that blissful meeting, let us reflect upon its unspeakable comforts, and we shall silence all our complaints, and have only one anxious concern, how to improve our own souls and to secure

the Redeemer's favour, that we may not fail to meet,—to meet, and enjoy forever, those whose loss we so sensibly feel, and so tenderly regret—And let us observe, that this is a most awakening motive to the cultivation of sincere and undissembled friendship, to activity in all its kind and endearing offices, to the valuing our beloved and Christian minds; namely, to look beyond the narrow limits of this world, and the short satisfactions of the present transitory scene, to that future, that glorious meeting, the exquisite raptures of which the good heart may faintly conceive, but can never fully express. If we have any love for our friends, any tender desire to meet them again, this is one of the strongest arguments possible to incite us to a diligence in all the duties of our holy religion; for what anguish can be conceived so great as to meet those friends again, only to be condemned by the Judge which hath blest them, and to be hurried, forever hurried from them into misery eternal!—Surely, if we consider this, we shall be anxious to serve and honour our God, and so will the joy of our future meeting be certain and inexpressibly great.

Look not then, oh afflicted mourner, to the breathless body and the devouring grave; hang not over the melancholy contemplation, nor esteem thy valued friend as forever lost to thee; a day is coming, thrice happy glorious day,—oh speed it, God of infinite love and goodness; make us fit, and hasten that joyful day!—a day is coming when thou shalt be set free from all the anguish of distressful sorrow; when thy eyes to weep no more, shall be closed on this world, and thy soul shall ascend to the Paradise of God! There shall the enraptured parents receive again their much loved child; there

shall the child, with transport, meet again those parents in joy, over whose graves, with filial duty, he dropt the affectionate tears; there shall the disconsolate widow cease her complaints; and her orphans, orphans no more, shall tell the sad tale of their distress to the husband, the father; distress even pleasing to recollect, now that happiness is its result, and heaven its end!—There shall the soft sympathies of endearing friendship be renewed; the affectionate sisters shall congratulate each other, and faithful friends again shall mingle converse, interests, amities, and walk high in bliss with God himself; while all shall join in one triumphant acknowledgment of his wise and fatherly goodness, who from afflictions deduceth good, who bringeth men to glory, through much tribulation, and purifieth them for his kingdom in the blood of the suffering Lamb!

CONSOLATIONS UNDER THE LOSS OF FRIENDS, DRAWN FROM CONSIDERATIONS RESPECTING OURSELVES.

Motives for submission and comfort, under the loss of our friends, may be derived from considerations which respect either God, our departed friends, ourselves, or others about us. We enlarged upon the arguments drawn from the two former topics, God and our departed Friends; it remains that we consider such as regard *ourselves* and *others*.

In order to moderate grief we should remember, with respect to *ourselves*, that the loss of friends is no strange or uncommon accident; that still we have many blessings remaining; that self-love is too much concerned, very often, in our grief; that God means our good, and that all affliction is profitable, if duly improved.

We should remember, 1. that no strange or uncommon thing hath happened to us; nothing but what is usual amongst men, nothing but what we well know is the universal condition of our nature. It is no more strange that a man should die than that he should be born: art thou better than thy fathers who are dead and gone? what makest thou thyself!

We come into a family and see one sitting lonely, in all the silence of distress; another is overwhelmed with tears and sighs; another is gone up to his closet like *David* to weep and cry out, *Oh, Absolom, my son, my son!*—And what is the cause of all this? why one that was born to die is dead! was it the first child, the first husband, the first friend that ever died? had you a patent from heaven against the common lot? would you have had God make this person immortal to please you? *He teareth himself in his anger* saith *Job;*—shall the earth be forsaken for thee, and shall the rock be removed out of its place? Reconcile thyself to the ordinary lot of thy being; no strange thing, but what thou shouldst every day expect, hath happened to thee!

2. But consider again, that in this friend all your blessings are not gone; how many mercies and comforts are continued to you, and how many troubles kept off which might have befallen you. You have lost some children; it might have been all. You have lost all; it might have been your husband or wife at the same time. You have lost husband or wife; it might have been also estate and all the means of subsistence: or suppose that gone too, you have liberty and health and peace and friends; or suppose they are also gone, yet, hold up your heart in this extreme distress, you are yet within reach of heaven, you yet have God to apply to, which is a

greater good than any you have lost, or than all put together. Pardon of sin and peace with God may still be yours; and if in the shipwreck of every earthly comfort you find these and embrace them, you will have no need to lament the severity of your affliction!

There are indeed some cases of distress which are particularly mournful, but then they have peculiar comforts. That of the *widow* for instance, left with many little helpless orphans weeping around her, and wanting support; deprived not only of the husband and the father, but the means of living and the supplies of bread; to such an hapless woman, thus severely exercised, what comfort can you offer, what blessings has she left?—She has the greatest of blessings; the immediate and especial care of *Providence;* of that God who throughout his gracious word, hath shewn himself tenderly concerned for the interest of the *widow* and the *orphan*, whose cause he hath promised not only to plead, but to avenge, and whose cause he hath recommended to his people by the strongest arguments! *Leave thy fatherless children to me*, saith he, *and I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me.** Let them but trust in God and lead such holy and exemplary lives as may give them reasonable grounds for such a trust, and they will experience the protecting mercy of his fatherly hand! their children, duly and carefully instructed by them, shall become pleasing comforts to their age, and happy soothers of all their sorrows. Friends, unexpected friends shall arise,—providential friends; *for pure religion and undefiled is to visit*, to visit with comfort and assistance

* See my Sermon on the Widow's Sons. Miracles, vol. i. p. 219. and the Reflections on Death, c. 4. p. 51.

the fatherless and widows in their affliction; and blessed of the Lord is the man who judgeth their cause, and helpeth them in their distress.

3. Another motive to moderate our grief for the loss of friends should be a serious inspection into the cause of that grief; and in such a case we shall often find that self-love is at the bottom of our sorrow. We have lost a pleasure and an advantage; we are mourning over the living rather than the dead; if one, every way the same, would make us easy, the sorrow is not for the departed, but for ourselves who survive. *Cicero*, speaking of the death of a friend, saith, "No evil hath happened to *him;* whatever it be, it concerns only *myself;* and to be severely afflicted at one's own misfortunes is a proof not of love to our friends but ourselves." As self-love therefore predominates so much, we ought to moderate our passion, and turn the stream of our grief another way, lamenting that our hearts are so selfish, and that we can with so much difficulty resign a present satisfaction, and make a sacrifice of our wills to God.

4. We are bound, moreover, to consider the end and design of affliction, and in consequence to improve it properly. But I insist not upon this, nor upon the due desert of our offences, which certainly merit punishment severer than we usually meet with; we, who out of so many possible miseries, have generally so few fall to our lot, when we are born to all by descent, subject to all by nature, and deserving of all by sin. But these topics I have enlarged upon in the former sections.

Let me only observe, that as the great end of Christianity is to draw our affections from this world, and to fix them upon a better; so nothing is more calculated

to produce that end, than the loss of our dearest friends, and their removal to that world, where we hope shortly to meet them. What is life without the blessings of sincere friendship? What do we live for but our friends? The only ties that hold us here, and make us willing to stay, are the tender, the affectionate ties of endearing relationship. But when the relations, the friends for whom only we lived, are no longer allowed to continue with us; when those who were dearer to us than ourselves, are forever taken from our mortal sight; surely we shall leave this pilgrim's state with less regret; surely it will make death more welcome, to have sent before those beloved ones, with whom we have the blessed hope of meeting in a better world, eternally to enjoy each other, and never more to be pained with the anguish of parting. So cut off the fibres, and loosen the root, and the tree fast fixed in the earth but now, easily falls, and sheds its leafy honours on the ground.

CONSOLATIONS UNDER THE LOSS OF FRIENDS, DRAWN FROM CONSIDERATIONS RESPECTING OTHERS.

To these considerations which respect ourselves, let us next add those, which may be drawn from a regard to others; to the world about us. I observed in the consolations which were offered to those on the *sick bed*, that a comparative view of ourselves with others, and of our many superior advantages, was a strong motive to submission and thankfulness; the same may be applied in the present case. Compare your loss and your circumstances with that of others, and you will soon see many more mournful and miserable than yourself. There

are a thousand persons with whom you would not change conditions, nor be willing to lay down your own, upon an allowance to take up their burden. By what law is it that you must only gaze at those above you, and take no notice of those below; that you must look on him only who is carried on men's shoulders, and never think of the poor men that carry him! Look down, look down, oh child of sorrow, look to the many sufferers beneath thee, and thou wilt learn, at once, acquiescence and content. For, be assured, that as the most certain method to feed an envious and discontented spirit, is to look up to those above you, so the surest method to learn submission under the influence of God's grace, is to cast your eyes on those in the inferior stations of life.

Consider, moreover, that while you mourn the loss of one friend, you owe the tribute of duty and regard to others who *survive;* for their sakes, you should learn to moderate your grief and compose your mind. Because you have lost a child will you forget that you have a husband? Because you have lost a husband will you forget you have children? Let not a concern for the dead totally obliterate a regard for the living.

Again, you owe a duty as a Christian to your fellow-christians. What will they think of your sincerity, when they see you overwhelmed with sorrow for the loss of a friend who is removed to God; for an affliction which your religion hath led you constantly to expect, and hath assured you is one mark of your adoption into the family of God, and a proof of his parental goodness: *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, even as a Father the son in whom he delighteth.* Nay, and perhaps God is pleased to propose you as an example; this loss may

be sent not for the trying of your own faith solely, but for the example of others. And will you defeat the purpose of God, and be so far wanting in humble resignation, that others will have no advantage from your example; nay, that your profession will be reproached through you, who, upon trial, do not exercise that virtue, which is the first in Christianity, and without which, (as we have before observed) all pretences to religion are vain, vain without an humble and filial submission of our will to God.

Let us also consider, as in a former case, that if we are wholly wanting in this virtue under afflictions and losses, we are not only unworthy the name of his disciples, who through suffering entered into glory, but we fall short of many heathens. A Spartan woman had five sons in the army upon the day of battle; when a soldier came running from the camp to bring tidings to the city, she was waiting at the gate; and inquiring *what news*, "thy five sons are slain," said the messenger. "I did not inquire after them," said she; "how goes it in the field of battle?" "We have gained the victory," said he, "Sparta is safe." "Then," said she, "Let us be thankful to the gods for our deliverance and our country's freedom." Zeno, the philosopher, lost all he had in a shipwreck; he protested it was the best voyage he ever made in his life, because it proved the occasion of his betaking himself to the study of virtue and wisdom. Seneca says, "I enjoy my friends and relations, as one who is to lose them; and I lose them as one who hath them still in possession." And to the gods he speaks thus: "I only want to know your will; as soon as I know what that is, I am always of the same mind.

I don't say you have *taken from me*, but that you *have accepted from* my hands what I was ready to offer!"

Surely these noble sentiments should inspire us with a generous emulation to excel those who were so inferior to us in every advantage. And while we profess ourselves disciples of a Master, who has set us such an example of suffering and of patience, and who hath given us so many and great promises, we shall cheerfully acquiesce in all his gracious disposals, receive good as well as evil with a thankful, resigned heart; that it may be said of us, as the Christians used to say of old, "we do not talk, but we live great things."

Such are the arguments for submission and comfort, under the loss of friends, which may be derived from a consideration of *ourselves* and *others*. Arguments which are so excellently applied by sir William Temple, in his famous letter to the countess of Essex, on her immoderate grief, occasioned by the loss of her only daughter, that, instead of recapitulating what hath been advanced, I will subjoin, in the next section, that letter, which well deserves the most careful perusal.

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE'S LETTER OF CONSOLATION TO LADY ESSEX, ON THE LOSS OF HER ONLY DAUGHTER.

I KNOW no duty in religion more generally agreed on, nor more justly required by God Almighty, than a perfect submission to his will in all things; nor do I think any disposition of mind can either please him more, or become us better, than that of being satisfied with all he gives, and contented with all he takes away. None, I am sure, can be of more honour to God, nor of more ease to ourselves; for, if we consider him as our

Maker, we cannot contend with him; if, as our Father, we ought not to distrust him; so that we may be confident whatever he does is intended for our good, and whatever happens, that we interpret otherwise, yet we can get nothing by repining, nor save any thing by resisting.

But if it were fit for us to reason with God Almighty, and your ladyship's loss be acknowledged as great as it could have been to any one alive, yet, I doubt, you would have but ill grace to complain at the rate you have done, or rather as you do; for the first motions or passions, how violent soever, may be pardoned; and it is only the course of them which makes them inexcusable. In this world, madam, there is nothing perfectly good, and whatever is called so, is but either comparatively with other things of its kind, or else with the evil that is mingled in its composition; so he is a good man that is better than men commonly are, or in whom the good qualities are more than the bad: so in the course of life, his condition is esteemed good, which is better than that of most other men, or wherein the good circumstances are more than the ill. By this measure, I doubt, madam, your complaints ought to be turned into acknowledgments, and your friends would have cause to rejoice rather than condole with you; for the goods or blessings of life are usually esteemed to be birth, health, beauty, friends, children, honour, riches. Now, when your ladyship has fairly considered how God Almighty has dealt with you in what he has given you of all these, you may be left to judge yourself, how you have dealt with him in your complaints for what he has taken away. But if you look about you, and consider

other lives as well as your own, and what your lot is in comparison with those that have been drawn in the circle of your knowledge; if you think how few are born with honour, how many die without name or children, how little beauty we see, how few friends we hear of, how many diseases, and how much poverty there is in the world, you will fall down upon your knees, and, instead of repining at one affliction, will admire so many blessings as you have received at the hand of God.

To put your ladyship in mind of what you are, and the advantages you have in all these points, would look like a design to flatter you; but this I may say, that we will pity you as much as you please, if you tell us who they are that you think, upon all circumstances, you have reason to envy. Now if I had a master that gave me all I could ask, but thought fit to take one thing from me again, either because I used it ill, or gave myself so much over to it, as to neglect either what I owed to him, or the rest of the world, or perhaps because he would show his power, and put me in mind from whom I held all the rest, would you think I had much reason to complain of hard usage, and *never* to *remember* any more what was left me, *never* to forget what was *taken* away.

It is true, you have lost a child, and therein all that could be lost in a child of that age; but you have kept one child, and are likely to do so long; you have the assurance of another, and the hopes of many more. You have kept a husband great in employment and in fortune, and, which is more, in the esteem of good men. You have kept your beauty and your health, unless you have destroyed them yourself, or discouraged them to

stay with you by using them ill. You have friends that are as kind to you as you can wish, or as you can give them leave to be by their fears of losing you, and being thereby so much the unhappier, the kinder they are to you. But you have honour and esteem from all that know you; or, if ever it fails in any degree, it is only upon that point of your seeming to be fallen out with God and the whole world, and neither to care for yourself, or any thing else, after what you have lost.

You will say, perhaps, *that* one thing was all to you, and your fondness of it made you indifferent to every thing else; but this, I doubt, will be so far from justifying you, that it will prove to be your *fault*, as well as your *misfortune*. God Almighty gave you all the blessings of life, and you set your heart wholly upon one, and despise or undervalue all the rest; is that his fault or yours? Nay, is it not to be very unthankful to Heaven, as well as very scornful to the rest of the world? Is it not to say, because you have lost one thing God hath given you, you thank him for nothing he has left, and care not what he takes away? Is it not to say, since that one thing is gone out of the world, there is nothing left in it which you think can deserve your kindness or esteem? A friend makes me a feast, and sets all before me that his care or kindness could provide; but I set my heart upon one dish alone, and if that happen to be thrown down, I scorn all the rest; and though he sends for another of the same, yet I rise from the table in a rage, and say my friend is my enemy, and has done me the greatest wrong in the world; have I reason, madam, or good grace in what I do? Or would it become me

better to eat of the rest that is before me, and think no more of what had happened, and could not be remedied?

All the precepts of christianity agree to teach and command us to moderate our passions, to temper our affections towards all things below; to be thankful for the possession, and patient under the loss, whenever he that gave it shall see fit to take it away. Your extreme fondness was, perhaps, as displeasing to God before, as now your extreme affliction; and your loss may have been a punishment for your faults in the manner of enjoying what you had. It is, at least, pious to ascribe all the ill that befalls us to our own demerits, rather than to injustice in God; and it becomes us better to adore all the issues of his providence in the effects, than inquire into the causes: for submission is the only way of reasoning between a creature and its Maker; and contentment in his will, is the greatest duty we can pretend to, and the best remedy we can apply to all our misfortunes.

But, madam, though religion were no party in your case, and that for so violent and injurious a grief you had nothing to answer to God, but only to the *world* and *yourself;* yet I very much doubt how you would be acquitted. We bring into the world with us a poor, needy, uncertain life, short at the longest, and unquiet at the best; all the imaginations of the witty and the wise have been perpetually busied to find out the ways how to revive it with pleasures, or relieve it with diversions; how to compose it with ease, and settle it with safety. To some of these ends have been employed the institutions of lawgivers, the reasonings of philosophers, the inventions of poets, the pains of labouring, and the ex-

travagancies of voluptuous men. All the world is perpetually at work about nothing else, but only that our poor mortal lives should pass the easier and happier for that little time we possess them, or else end the better when we lose them. Upon this occasion riches came to be coveted, honours to be esteemed, friendship and love to be pursued, and virtues themselves to be admired in the world. Now, madam, is it not to bid defiance to all mankind to condemn their universal opinions and designs, if, instead of passing your life as well and easily, you resolve to pass it as ill and as miserable as you can? You grow insensible to the conveniences of riches, the delights of honour and praise, the charms of kindness or friendship, nay, to the observance or applause of virtues themselves; for who can you expect, in these excesses of passion, will allow you to show either temperance or fortitude, to be either prudent or just? and for your friends, I suppose, you reckon upon losing their kindness, when you have sufficiently convinced them they can never hope for any of yours, since you have none left for yourself or any thing else. You declare, upon all occasions, you are incapable of receiving any comfort or pleasure in any thing that is left in this world; and I assure you, madam, none can ever love you, that can have no hopes ever to please you.

Among the several inquiries and endeavours after the happiness of life, the sensual men agree in pursuit of every pleasure they can start, without regarding the pains of the chase, the weariness when it ends, or how little the quarry is worth. The busy and ambitious fall into the more lasting pursuits of power and riches; the speculative men prefer tranquillity of mind, before the

different motions of passion and appetite, or the common successions of desire and satiety, of pleasure and pain; but this may seem too dull a principle for the happiness of life, which is ever in motion; and passions are perhaps the stings, without which they say no honey is made; yet I think all sorts of men have ever agreed, they ought to be our servants and not our masters; to give us some agitation for entertainment or exercise, but never to throw our reason out of its seat. Perhaps I would not always sit still, or would be sometimes on horseback; but I would never ride a horse that galls my flesh, or shakes my bones, or that runs away with me as he pleases, so as I can neither stop at a river or precipice. Better no passions at all, than have them too violent; or such alone, as instead of heightening our pleasures, afford us nothing but vexation and pain.

In all such losses as your ladyship's has been, there is something that common nature cannot be denied; there is a great deal that good nature may be allowed: but all excessive and outrageous grief or lamentation for the dead, was accounted among the ancient Christians, to have something of heathenish; and, among the civil nations of old, to have something of barbarous; and therefore it has been the care of the first to moderate it by their precepts, and the latter to restrain it by their law. The longest time that has been allowed to the forms of mourning by the custom of any country, and in any relation, has been but that of a year, in which space the body is commonly supposed to be mouldered away to earth, and to retain no more figure of what it was; but this has been given only to the loss of parents, of husband, or wife. On the other side, to children un-

der age nothing has been allowed; and, I suppose with particular reason, the common ground of all general customs, perhaps they die in innocence, and without having tasted the miseries of life;—so as we are sure they are well when they leave us, and escape much ill, which would, in all appearance, have befallen them if they had staid longer with us. Besides a parent may have twenty children, and so his mourning may run through all the best of his life, if his losses are frequent of that kind; and our kindness to children so young, is taken to proceed from common opinions, or fond imaginations, not friendship or esteem; and to be grounded upon entertainment, rather than use in many offices of life: nor would it pass from any person besides your ladyship, to say you lost a companion and a friend at nine years old, though you lost one indeed, who gave the fairest hopes that could be of being both in time, and every thing else that was esteemable and good; but yet, that itself, God only knows, considering the changes of humour and disposition, which are as great as those of feature and shape the first sixteen years of our lives, considering the chances of time, the infection of company, the snares of the world, and the passions of youth; so that the most excellent and agreeable creature, of that tender age, and that seemed born under the happiest stars, might, by the course of years and accidents, come to be the most miserable herself, and more trouble to her friends by living long, than she could have done by dying young.

Yet, after all, madam, I think your loss so great, and some measure of your grief so deserved, that would all your passionate complaints, all the anguish of your heart

do any thing to retrieve it; could tears water the lovely plant, so as to make it grow again after once it is cut down; would sighs furnish new breath, or could it draw life and spirits from the wasting of yours; I am sure your friends would be so far from accusing your passion, that they would encourage it as much, and share it as deep as they could. But, alas! the eternal laws of the creation extinguish all such hopes, forbid all such designs: nature gives us many children and friends to take them away, but takes none away to give them us again. And this makes the excesses of grief to have been so universally condemned as a thing unnatural, because so much in vain; whereas nature, they say, does nothing in vain; as a thing so unreasonable, because so contrary to our own designs; for we all design to be well, and at ease, and by grief we make ourselves ill of imaginary wounds, and raise ourselves troubles most properly out of the dust, whilst our ravings and complaints are but like arrows shot up in the air at no mark, and so to no purpose, but only to fall back upon our heads, and destroy ourselves, instead of recovering or revenging our friends.

Perhaps, madam, you will say this is your design, or if not your desire; but I hope you are not yet so far gone, or so desperately bent: your ladyship knows very well your life is not your own, but his that lent it you to manage, and preserve the best you could, and not to throw it away, as if it came from some common hand. It belongs, in a great measure, to your country, and your family; and therefore, by all human laws, as well as divine, self-murder has ever been agreed on as the greatest crime, and is punished here with the utmost shame, which is all that can be inflicted upon the dead.

But is the crime much less to kill ourselves by a slow poison, than by a sudden wound? Now, if we do it, and know we do it by a long and continual grief, can we think ourselves innocent? What great difference is there if we break our hearts or consume them; if we pierce them, or bruise them; since all determines in the same death, as all arises from the same despair? But what if it goes not so far? It is not indeed so bad as might be, but that does not excuse it from being very ill: though I do not kill my neighbour, is it no hurt to wound him, or spoil him of the conveniences of life? the greatest crime is for a man to kill himself; is it a small one to wound himself by anguish of heart, by grief or despair to ruin his health, to shorten his age, to deprive himself of all the pleasures, or ease, or enjoyments of life?

Next to the mischiefs we do ourselves, are those we do our children and our friends, as those who deserve best of us, or at least deserve no ill. The child you carry about you, what has that done, that you should endeavour to deprive it of life, almost as soon as you bestow it? Or if, at the best, you suffer it to live to be born, yet, by your ill usage of yourself, should so much impair the strength of its body and health, and perhaps the very temper of its mind, by giving it such an infusion of melancholy, as may serve to discolour the objects, and disrelish the accidents it may meet with in the common train of life? But this is one you are not yet acquainted with; what will you say to another you are? Were it a small injury to my lord Capel, to deprive him of a mother, from whose prudence and kindness he may justly expect the care of his health and education, the forming of his body, and the cultivating of his mind;

the seeds of honour and virtue, and thereby the true principles of a happy life? How has my lord of Essex deserved, that you should go about to lose him a wife he loves with so much passion, and which is more, with such reason; so great an honour and support to his family, so great a hope to his fortune, and comfort to his life? Are there so many left of your own great family, that you should desire, in a manner wholly to reduce it, by suffering the greatest, and almost last branch of it, to wither away before its time? Or is your country in this age so stored with great persons, that you should envy it those we may justly expect from so noble a race?

Whilst I had any hopes your tears would ease you, or that your grief would consume itself by liberty and time, your ladyship knows very well I never once accused it, nor ever increased it, like many others, by the common formal ways of assuaging it; and this I am sure is the first office of this kind I ever went about to perform, otherwise than in the most ordinary forms. I was in hope what was so violent could not be so long; but when I observed it to grow stronger with age, and increase like a stream the further it run; when I saw it draw out to so many unhappy consequences, and threaten no less than your child, your health, and your life; I could no longer forbear this endeavour, nor end it without begging of your ladyship, for God's sake, and for your own, for your children's and your friends', for your country's and your family's, that you would no longer abandon yourself to so disconsolate a passion, but that you would at length awaken your piety, give way to your prudence, or at least rouse up the invincible spirit of the Piercies, that never yet shrunk at any

disaster; that you would sometimes remember the great honours and fortunes of your family, not always the losses; cherish those veins of good humour that are sometimes so natural to you, and sear up those of ill, that would make you so unnatural to your children, and to yourself; but, above all, that you would enter upon the cares of your health, and your life, for your friends' sake, at least, if not for your own. For my part, I know nothing could be to me so great an honour and satisfaction, as if your ladyship would own me to have contributed towards this cure; but, however, none can, perhaps, more justly pretend to your pardon for the attempt, since there is none, I am sure, that has always had at heart a greater honour for your ladyship's family, nor can have for your person more devotion and esteem.

CONCLUSIONS OF CONSOLATIONS UNDER THE LOSS OF FRIENDS.

Such is the advice which this great man gives to enforce the duty of submission to God's will; a duty, as he well observes, most acceptable to God, and most becoming us. And, I trust, that a serious reflection on these arguments on what hath been offered in this and the former sections to instruct and comfort, will not fail of its desired effect; but that, whenever we are tried with the loss of friends, the considerations drawn from a regard to God, to our deceased friends, to our own selves, and to others that survive, will render us patient and resigned, and enable us to say, in the words of the most eminent patern of resignation, *Father, thy will be done!*

How blessed is such a temper! what a source of everlasting comforts! Surely we shall be anxious to ob-

tain it, especially as there is so great need of it amongst such a variety of changes and chances as human nature is heir to; and, to obtain it, permit me to observe, in conclusion, one way will be to know and to remove the great obstacles and impediments to it. These are *unbelief*, which, in whatever degree it prevails, lessens the influence of invisible things. Did we believe the sincere word of God, did we firmly and undoubtedly rely on the promises of Christ, how could we sorrow, as men without hope, for those that sleep in him, for those that sleep the happy slumber of death, to awaken to immortality and glory! the stronger our faith, the greater will be our resignation and comfort.

Impatience, and an *indulgence* of *self-will*, is another great impediment to resignation; this is in all respects, an unhappiness. Parents should early look to this evil in their offspring; from an indulgence of self-will in childhood what miseries are often treasured up for our growing years! Indeed, no people have their will less than they who are for having it always; they draw more troubles upon themselves, and feel them deeper. Take away self-will, and you take away a thousand sorrows which self-will creates to itself, and from which resignation totally delivers.

Too great expectations from the world and the things of it, is another impediment to this heavenly temper; the higher we rise in our expectations and opinions of things, the lower we fall in the vexations of disappointment. We cannot expect too little from a vain, delusive, and transitory scene like the present. Very strong *affections* also make way for great sorrows, and render submission to Providence more difficult. We should be

careful, in all our affections for temporal blessings, to remember, that they are mortal and mutable.

An unwillingness to reflect on scenes of parting makes parting more painful, and resignation more uneasy; he that will die well, must die daily: so he who will resign well, must practice upon resignation, and frequently search into his own mind.—What if I should return home this evening and find my house in flames? That fair estate, which is now the supply of my wants, what if it should take wings and fly away? what if the desire of my eyes should be taken off with a stroke, or that pretty and beloved child, I should see it lie a dead corpse? that which I now lay in my bosom, I should then not be able to bear in my sight? What should I then do? how should I then behave? am I prepared for such a case? If not, I have the more reason to think of it beforehand. If I am prepared for it, then I can the better bear to think of it now; or else how shall I bear the thing itself, when by refusing to think of it at all beforehand, I have continued to make it more intolerably afflictive. Sudden and unexpected evils always affect us most; the mind bears with fortitude what it foresees, and is prepared to encounter.

Lastly, another impediment to resignation is an overweening opinion of our own *deserts*. This leads us to think that God hath dealt hardly with us; also, whereas, would we but remember that all we have is his free gift, that we neither have nor can deserve any thing from him; nay, rather that we deserve punishment only;—we shall bow our heads with true submission. Humility is the ground work of almost every virtue, but especially of

resignation; and when we reflect seriously on ourselves, surely we can never be deficient in humility!

On ourselves, who shortly must follow the beloved friends whom we lament;—must shortly mingle like them, with the dust of the earth, and enter into the unknown world! of the blessings of which we are satisfied, want of resignation will certainly deprive us; and therefore as the hope of once more meeting our dear departed friends in glory is one of the strongest motives for comfort, so ought it to be the strongest motive for *resignation*, if we wish that hope to be rationally founded! Let us therefore consider ourselves and our friends only as so many pilgrims and sojourners, travelling forward to our father's house; let us consider those who are departed only as arrived there something before us; and though we may tenderly lament the loss of their sweet society, the endearments of their friendship, the kindness and support of their aid; though all we love and all we esteem is withdrawn, when they are withdrawn from us; yet let us console our hearts with this pleasing remembrance, that we too shall shortly finish our journey, that we too shall shortly lay a side our Palmer's weeds, those robes of mortality; and shall shortly quit these houses of clay: which surely we may quit more contentedly, when all, who are valuable to us, have already forsaken them, and are waiting to receive us in a place, where arguments of consolation shall no more be needful, where the tear shall forever be wiped from our eyes, and the bitterness of sorrow forever removed from our hearts!

There, oh there may we meet all our Christian friends, with whom we have travelled peacefully together through the bad roads of this life; there may we meet all our de-

ceased friends whom we love here below; and there we may forever enjoy the happy fruits of our own constant endeavours to obey the commands, and to resign, as dutiful children, to the better will of our Father and our God, in Jesus Christ our only Lord and Saviour. Amen.

A SERMON ON DEATH,

BY HUGH BLAIR, D. D. F. R. S.

PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC AND BELLES LETTRES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,

Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.—*Ecclesiastes*, xii. 5.

This is a sight which incessantly presents itself. Our eyes are so much accustomed to it, that it hardly makes any impression. Throughout every season of the year, and during the course of almost every day, the funerals which pass along the streets show us *man going to his long home*. Were death a rare and uncommon object; were it only once in the course of a man's life, that he beheld one of his fellow-creatures carried to the grave, a solemn awe would fill him; he would stop short in the midst of his pleasures; he would even be chilled with secret horror. Such impressions, however, would prove unsuitable to the nature of our present state. When they became so strong as to render men unfit for the ordinary business of life, they would in a great measure defeat the intention of our being placed in this world. It is better ordered by the wisdom of Providence, that they should be weakened by the frequency of their recurrence; and so tempered by the mixture of other passions, as to allow us to go on freely in acting our parts on earth.

Yet, familiar as death is now become, it is undoubtedly fit, that by an event of so important a nature, some impression should be made upon our minds. It ought not to pass over, as one of those common incidents which are beheld without concern, and awaken no reflection. There are many things which the funerals of our fellow-creatures are calculated to teach; and happy it were for the gay and dissipated, if they would listen more frequently to the instructions of so awful a monitor. In the context, the wise man had described, under a variety of images suited to the eastern style, the growing infirmities of old age, until they arrive at that period which concludes them all; when, as he beautifully expresses it, *the silver cord being loosened, and the golden bowl broken, the pitcher being broken at the fountain, and the wheel at the cistern, man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.* In discoursing from these words it is not my purpose to treat, at present, of the instructions to be drawn from the prospect of our own death. I am to confine myself to the death of others; to consider death as one of the most frequent and considerable events that happen in the course of human affairs; and to show in what manner we ought to be affected, first, by the death of strangers, or indifferent persons; secondly, by the death of friends; and thirdly, by the death of enemies.

I. By the death of indifferent persons; if any can be called indifferent, to whom we are so nearly allied as brethren by nature, and brethren in mortality. When we observe the funerals that pass along the streets, or when we walk among the monuments of death, the first thing that naturally strikes us is the undistinguishing blow with which that common enemy levels all. We be-

hold a great promiscuous multitude all carried to the same abode; all lodged in the same dark and silent mansions. There, mingle persons of every age and character, of every rank and condition in life; the young and the old, the poor and the rich, the gay and the grave, the renowned and the ignoble. A few weeks ago, most of those whom we have seen carried to the grave, walked about as we do now on the earth; enjoyed their friends, beheld the light of the sun, and were forming designs for future days. Perhaps, it is not long since they were engaged in scenes of high festivity. For them, perhaps, the cheerful company assembled; and in the midst of the circle they shone with gay and pleasing vivacity. But now—to them, all is finally closed. To them, no more shall the seasons return, or the sun arise. No more shall they hear the voice of mirth, or behold the face of man. They are swept from the universe, as though they had never been. *They are carried away as with a flood: The wind has passed over them, and they are gone.*

When we contemplate this desolation of the human race; this final termination of so many hopes; this silence that now reigns among those who, a little while ago, were so busy, or so gay; who can avoid being touched with sensations at once awful and tender? What heart but then warms with the glow of humanity? In whose eye does not the tear gather, on revolving the fate of passing and short-lived man? Such sensations are so congenial to human nature, that they are attended with a certain kind of sorrowful pleasure. Even voluptuaries themselves, sometimes indulge a taste for funereal melancholy. After the festive assembly is dismissed, they chuse to walk retired in the shady grove, and to contemplate the vene-

rable sepulchres of their ancestors. This melancholy pleasure arises from two different sentiments meeting at the same time in the breast; a sympathetic sense of the shortness and vanity of life, and a persuasion that something exists after death; sentiments which unite at the view of *the house appointed for all living*. A tomb, it has been justly said, is a monument situated on the confines of both worlds. It, at once, presents to us the termination of the inquietudes of life, and sets before us the image of eternal rest. *There*, in the elegant expressions of Job, *the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and the great are there; and the servant is free from his master.* It is very remarkable, that in all languages, and among all nations, death has been described in a style of this kind; expressed by figures of speech, which convey everywhere the same idea of rest, or sleep, or retreat from the evils of life. Such a style perfectly agrees with the general belief of the soul's immortality, but assuredly conveys no high idea of the boasted pleasures of the world. It shows how much all mankind have felt this life to be a scene of trouble and care; and have agreed in opinion, that perfect rest is to be expected only in the grave.

There, says Job, *are the small and the great*. There, the poor man lays down at last the burden of his wearisome life. No more shall he groan under the load of poverty and toil. No more shall he hear the insolent calls of the master, from whom he received his scanty wages. No more shall he be raised from needful slumber on his bed of straw, nor be hurried away from his homely meal, to undergo the repeated labours of the day. While his

humble grave is preparing, and a few poor and decayed neighbours are carrying him thither, it is good for us to think, that this man too was our brother; that for him the aged and destitute wife, and the needy children now weep; that, neglected as he was by the world, he possessed, perhaps, both a sound understanding and a worthy heart, and is now carried by angels to rest in Abraham's bosom.—At no great distance from him, the grave is opened to receive the rich and proud man. For, as it is said with emphasis in the parable, *the rich man also died, and was buried.** He *also* died. His riches prevented not his sharing the same fate with the poor man; perhaps, through luxury, they accelerated his doom. Then, indeed, *the mourners go about the streets;* and while, in all the pomp and magnificence of wo, his funeral is prepared, his heirs, in the mean time, impatient to examine his will, are looking on one another with jealous eyes, and already beginning to quarrel about the division of his substance.—One day, we see carried along the coffin of the smiling infant; the flower just nipped as it began to blossom in the parents' view: and the next day, we behold the young man, or young woman, of blooming form and promising hopes, laid in an untimely grave. While the funeral is attended by a numerous, unconcerned company, who are discoursing to one another about the news of the day, or the ordinary affairs of life, let our thoughts rather follow to the house of mourning, and represent to themselves what is going on there. There, we would see a disconsolate family, sitting in silent grief, thinking of the sad breach that is made in their

* Luke, xvi. 22.

little society; and, with tears in their eyes, looking to the chamber that is now left vacant, and to every memorial that presents itself of their departed friend. By such attention to the woes of others, the selfish hardness of our hearts will be gradually softened, and melted down into humanity.

Another day, we follow to the grave one who, in old age, and after a long career of life, has in full maturity sunk at last into rest. As we are going along to the mansion of the dead, it is natural for us to think, and to discourse, of all the changes which such a person has seen during the course of his life. He has passed, it is likely, through varieties of fortune. He has experienced prosperity, and adversity. He has seen families and kindreds rise and fall. He has seen peace and war, succeeding in their turns; the face of his country undergoing many alterations; and the very city in which he dwelt rising, in a manner, new around him. After all he has beheld, his eyes are now closed forever. He was becoming a stranger in the midst of a new succession of men. A race who knew him not, had arisen to fill the earth. Thus passes the world away. Throughout all ranks and conditions, *one generation passeth, and another generation cometh;* and this great inn is by turns evacuated, and replenished, by troops of succeeding pilgrims.—O vain and inconstant world! O fleeting and transient life! When will the sons of men learn to think of thee, as they ought? When will they learn humanity from the afflictions of their brethren; or moderation and wisdom, from the sense of their own fugitive state?—But, now to come nearer to ourselves, let us,

II. Consider the death of our friends. Want of reflection, or the long habits, either of a very busy, or a very

dissipated life, may have rendered men insensible to all such objects as I have now described. The stranger, and the unknown, fall utterly unnoticed at their side. Life proceeds with them in its usual train, without being affected by events in which they take no personal concern. But the dissolution of those ties which had long bound men together, in intimate and familiar union, gives a painful shock to every heart. When a family, who, for years, had been living in comfort and peace, are suddenly shattered by some of their most beloved or respected members being torn from them; when the husband or the spouse are separated forever from the companion who, amidst every vicissitude of fortune, solaced their life; who had shared all their joys, and participated in all their sorrows; when the weeping parent is folding in his arms the dying child whom he tenderly loved; when he is giving his last blessing, receiving the last fond adieu, looking for the last time on that countenance, now wasting and faded, which he had once beheld with much delight; then is the time, when the heart is made to drink all the bitterness of human wo.—But I seek not to wound your feeling by dwelling on these sad descriptions. Let us rather turn our thoughts to the manner in which such events ought to be received and improved, since happen they must in the life of man.

Then, indeed, is the time to weep. Let not a false idea of fortitude, or mistaken conceptions of religious duty, be employed to restrain the bursting emotion. Let the heart seek its relief, in the free effusion of just and natural sorrow. It is becoming in every one to show, on such occasions, that he feels, as a man ought to feel. At the same time, let moderation temper the grief of a good

man and a Christian. He must not *sorrow like those who have no hope.* As high elation of spirits befits not the joys, so continued and overwhelming dejection suits not the griefs of this transitory world. Grief, when it goes beyond certain bounds, becomes unmanly; when it lasts beyond a certain time, becomes unseasonable. Let him not reject the alleviation which time brings to all the wounds of the heart, but suffer excessive grief to subside, by degrees, into a tender and affectionate remembrance. Let him consider, that it is in the power of Providence to raise him up other comforts in the place of those he has lost. Or, if his mind, at present, reject the thoughts of such consolation, let it turn for relief to the prospect of a future meeting in a happier world. This is indeed the chief soother of affliction; the most powerful balm of the bleeding heart. It assists us to view death, as no more than a temporary separation of friends. They whom we have loved still live, though not present to us. They are only removed into a different mansion in the house of the common Father. The toils of their pilgrimage are finished; and they are gone to the land of rest and peace. They are gone from this dark and troubled world, to join the great assembly of the just; and to dwell in the midst of everlasting light. In due time we hope to be associated with them in these blissful habitations. Until this season of reunion arrive, no principle of religion discourages our holding correspondence of affection with them by means of faith and hope.

Meanwhile, let us respect the virtues, and cherish the memory, of the deceased. Let their little failings be now forgotten. Let us dwell on what was amiable in their character, imitate their worth, and trace their steps. By

this means, the remembrance of those whom we loved shall become useful and improving to us, as well as sacred and dear; if we accustom ourselves to consider them as still speaking, and exhorting us to all that is good; if, in situations where our virtue is tried, we call up their respected idea to view, and, as placed in their presence, think of the part which we could act before them without a blush.

Moreover, let the remembrance of the friends whom we have lost, strengthen our affection to those that remain. The narrower the circle becomes of those we love, let us draw the closer together. Let the heart that has been softened by sorrow, mellow into gentleness and kindness; make liberal allowance for the weaknesses of others; and devest itself of the little prejudices that may have formerly prepossessed it against them. The greater havock that death has made among our friends on earth, let us cultivate connection more with God, and heaven, and virtue. Let those noble views which man's immortal character affords, fill and exalt our minds. Passengers only through this sublunary region, let our thoughts often ascend to that divine country, which we are taught to consider as the native seat of the soul. There, we form connections that are never broken. There, we meet with friends who never die. Among celestial things there is firm and lasting constancy, while all that is on earth changes and passes away.—Such are some of the fruits we should reap from the tender feelings excited by the death of friends. But they are not only our friends who die. Our enemies also must go to their *long home*. Let us, therefore,

III. Consider how we ought to be affected, when they from whom suspicions have alienated, or rivalry has divided us; they with whom we have long contended, or by whom we imagine ourselves to have suffered wrong, are laid, or about to be laid, in the grave. How inconsiderable then appear those broils in which we had been long involved, those contests and feuds which we thought were to last forever? The awful moment that now terminates them, makes us feel their vanity. If there be a spark of humanity left in the breast, the remembrance of our common fate then awakens it. Is there a man, who, if he were admitted to stand by the death bed of his bitterest enemy, and beheld him enduring that conflict which human nature must suffer at the last, would not be inclined to stretch forth the hand of friendship, to utter the voice of forgiveness, and to wish for perfect reconciliation with him before he left the world? Who is there that, when he beholds the remains of his adversary deposited in the dust, feels not, in that moment, some relentings at the remembrance of those past animosities which mutually embittered their life?—"There lies the man with whom I contended so long, "silent and mute forever. He is fallen; and I am about "to follow him. How poor is the advantage which I now "enjoy? Where are the fruits of all our contests? In a "short time we shall be laid together; and no remem-"brance remain of either of us, under the sun. How "many mistakes may there have been between us? Had "not he his virtues and good qualities, as well as I? "When we shall both appear before the judgment-seat "of God, shall I be found innocent, and free of blame, "for all the enmity I have borne to him?"—My friends,

let the anticipation of such sentiments, serve now to correct the inveteracy of prejudice, to cool the heat of anger, to allay the fierceness of resentment. How unnatural it is for animosities so lasting to possess the hearts of mortal men, that nothing can extinguish them, but the cold hand of death? Is there not a sufficient proportion of evils in the short span of human life, that we seek to increase their number, by rushing into unnecessary contests with one another? When a few suns more have rolled over our heads, friends and foes shall have retreated together; and their love and their hatred be equally buried. Let our few days, then, be spent in peace. While we are all journeying onwards to death, let us rather *bear one another's burdens*, than harass one another by the way. Let us smooth and cheer the road as much as we can, rather than fill the valley of our pilgrimage with the hateful monuments of our contention and strife.

Thus I have set before you some of those meditations which are naturally suggested by the prevalence of death around us; by the death of strangers, of friends, and of enemies. Because topics of this nature are obvious, let it not be thought that they are without use. They require to be recalled, repeated, and enforced. Moral and religious instruction derives its efficacy, not so much from what men are taught to know, as from what they are brought to feel. It is not the dormant knowledge of any truths, but the vivid impression of them, which has influence on practice. Neither let it be thought, that such meditations are unseasonable intrusions upon those who are living in health, in affluence, and ease. There is no hazard of their making too deep or painful an impression. The gloom which they occasion is transient; and

will soon, too soon, it is probable, be dispelled by the succeeding affairs and pleasures of the world. To wisdom it certainly belongs, that men should be impressed with just views of their nature, and their state: and the pleasures of life will always be enjoyed to most advantage when they are tempered with serious thought. There is *a time to mourn;* as well as *a time to rejoice.* There is a virtuous *sorrow, which is better than laughter.* There is a *sadness of the countenance, by which the heart is made better.*

A SERMON,

BY SAMUEL JOHNSON, L. L. D.

WRITTEN FOR THE FUNERAL OF HIS WIFE.

Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die.

John, xi. 25, 26.

To afford adequate consolations to the last hour, to cheer the gloomy passage through the valley of the shadow of death, and to ease that anxiety, to which beings, prescient of their own dissolution, and conscious of their own danger, must be necessarily exposed, is the privilege only of revealed religion. All those, to whom the supernatural light of Heavenly doctrine has never been imparted, however formidable for power, or illustrious for wisdom, have wanted that knowledge of their future state which alone can give comfort to misery, or security to enjoyment; and have been forced to rush forwards to the grave, through the darkness of ignorance; or, if they happened to be more refined and inquisitive, to solace their passage with the fallacious and uncertain glimmer of philosophy.

There were, doubtless, at all times, as there are now, many who lived with very little thought concerning their end; many whose time was wholly filled up by public or domestic business, by the pursuits of ambition, or the desire of riches; many who dissolved themselves in luxurious enjoyments, and, when they could lull their

minds by any present pleasure, had no regard to distant events, but withheld their imagination from sallying out into futurity, or catching any terror that might interrupt their quiet; and there were many who rose so little above animal life, that they were completely engrossed by the objects about them, and had their views extended no farther than to the next hour; in whom the ray of reason was half extinct, and who had neither hopes nor fears, but of some near advantage, or some pressing danger.

But multitudes there must always be, and greater multitudes as arts and civility prevail, who cannot wholly withdraw their thoughts from death. All cannot be distracted with business, or stunned with the clamours of assemblies, or the shouts of armies. All cannot live in the perpetual dissipation of successive diversions, nor will all enslave their understandings to their senses, and seek felicity in the gross gratifications of appetite. Some must always keep their reason and their fancy in action, and seek either honour or pleasure from intellectual operations; and from them, others, more negligent or sluggish, will be in time fixed or awakened; knowledge will be perpetually diffused, and curiosity hourly enlarged.

But, when the faculties were once put in motion, when the mind had broken loose from the shackles of sense, and made excursions to remote consequences, the first consideration that would stop her course must be the incessant waste of life, the approach of age, and the certainty of death; the approach of that time, in which strength must fail, and pleasure fly away, and the certainty of that dissolution which shall put an end to

all the prospects of this world. It is impossible to think, and not sometimes to think on death. Hope, indeed, has many powers of delusion; whatever is possible, however unlikely, it will teach us to promise ourselves; but death no man has escaped, and therefore no man can hope to escape it. From this dreadful expectation no shelter or refuge can be found. Whatever we see, forces it upon us; whatever is, new or old, flourishing or declining, either directly, or by a very short deduction, leads man to the consideration of his end; and accordingly we find, that the fear of death has always been considered as the great enemy of human quiet, the polluter of the feast of happiness, and embitterer of the cup of joy. The young man who rejoices in his youth, amidst his music and his gayety, has always been disturbed with the thought, that his youth will be quickly at an end. The monarch, to whom it is said that he is a god, has always been reminded by his own heart, that he shall die like man.

This unwelcome conviction, which is thus continually pressed upon the mind, every art has been employed to oppose. The general remedy, in all ages, has been to chase it away from the present moment, and to gain a suspense of the pain that could not be cured. In the ancient writings, we, therefore, find the shortness of life frequently mentioned as an excitement to jollity and pleasure; and may plainly discover, that the authors had no other means of relieving that gloom with which the uncertainty of human life clouded their conceptions. Some of the philosophers, indeed, appear to have sought a nobler, and a more certain remedy, and to have endeavoured to overpower the force of death by arguments, and to dispel the gloom by the light of reason. They

inquired into the nature of the soul of man, and shewed, at least probably, that it is a substance distinct from matter, and therefore independent on the body, and exempt from dissolution and corruption. The arguments, whether physical or moral, upon which they established this doctrine, it is not necessary to recount to a Christian audience, by whom it is believed upon more certain proofs, and higher authority; since, though they were such as might determine the calm mind of a Philosopher, inquisitive only after truth, and uninfluenced by external objects; yet they were such as required leisure and capacity, not allowed in general to mankind; they were such as many could never understand, and of which, therefore, the efficacy and comfort were confined to a small number, without any benefit to the unenlightened multitude.

Such has been hitherto the nature of philosophical arguments, and such it must probably forever remain; for, though, perhaps, the successive industry of the studious may increase the number, or advance the probability, of arguments; and, though continual contemplation of matter will, I believe, shew it, at length, wholly incapable of motion, sensation, or order, by any powers of its own, and therefore necessarily establish the immateriality, and, probably, the immortality of the soul; yet there never can be expected a time, in which the gross body of mankind can attend to such speculations, or can comprehend them; and, therefore, there never can be a time, in which this knowledge can be taught in such a manner, as to be generally conducive to virtue, or happiness, but by a messenger from God, from the Creator of the world, and the Father of Spirits.

To persuade common and uninstructed minds to the belief of any fact, we may every day perceive, that the testimony of one man, whom they think worthy of credit, has more force than the arguments of a thousand reasoners, even when the arguments are such as they may be imagined completely qualified to comprehend. Hence it is plain, that the constitution of mankind is such, that abstruse and intellectual truths can be taught no otherwise than by positive assertion, supported by some sensible evidence, by which the asserter is secured from the suspicion of falsehood; and that if it should please God to inspire a teacher with some demonstration of the immortality of the soul, it would far less avail him for general instruction, than the power of working a miracle in its vindication, unless God should, at the same time, inspire all the hearers with docility and apprehension, and turn, at once, all the sensual, the giddy, the lazy, the busy, the corrupt and the proud, into humble, abstracted and diligent philosophers.

To bring life and immortality to light, to give such proofs of our future existence, as may influence the most narrow mind, and fill the most capacious intellect, to open prospects beyond the grave, in which the thought may expatiate without obstruction, and to supply a refuge and support to the mind, amidst all the miseries of decaying nature, is the peculiar excellence of the Gospel of Christ. Without this heavenly Instructor, he who feels himself sinking under the weight of years, or melting away by the slow waste of a lingering disease, has no other remedy than obdurate patience, a gloomy resignation to that which cannot be avoided; and he who follows his friend, or whoever there is yet

dearer than a friend, to the grave, can have no other consolation than that which he derives from the general misery; the reflection, that he suffers only what the rest of mankind must suffer; a poor consideration, which rather awes us to silence, than sooths us to quiet, and which does not abate the sense of our calamity, though it may sometimes make us ashamed to complain.

But so much is our condition improved by the Gospel, so much is the sting of death rebated, that we may now be invited to the contemplation of our mortality, as to a pleasing employment of the mind, to an exercise delightful and recreative, not only when calamity and persecution drive us out from the assemblies of men, and sorrow and wo represent the grave as a refuge and an asylum, but even in the hours of the highest earthly prosperity, when our cup is full, and when we have laid up stores for ourselves; for, in him who believes the promise of the Saviour of the world, it can cause no disturbance to remember, that this night his soul may be required of him; and he who suffers one of the sharpest evils which this life can shew, amidst all its varieties of misery; he that has lately been separated from the person whom a long participation of good and evil had endeared to him; he who has seen kindness snatched from his arms, and fidelity torn from his bosom; he whose ear is no more to be delighted with tender instruction, and whose virtue shall be no more awakened by the seasonable whispers of mild reproof, may yet look, without horror, on the tomb which encloses the remains of what he loved and honoured, as upon a place which, if it revives the sense of his loss, may calm him with the hope of that state in which there shall be no more grief or separation.

To Christians the celebration of a funeral is by no means a solemnity of barren and unavailing sorrow, but established by the church for other purposes.

First, for the consolation of sorrow. Secondly, for the enforcement of piety. The mournful solemnity of the burial of the dead is instituted, first, for the consolation of that grief to which the best minds, if not supported and regulated by religion, are most liable. They who most endeavour the happiness of others, who devote their thoughts to tenderness and pity, and studiously maintain the reciprocation of kindness, by degrees mingle their souls, in such a manner, as to feel, from separation, a total destitution of happiness, a sudden abruption of all their prospects, a cessation of all their hopes, schemes and desires. The whole mind becomes a gloomy vacuity, without any image or form of pleasure, a chaos of confused wishes, directed to no particular end, or to that which, while we wish, we cannot hope to obtain; for the dead will not revive; those whom God has called away from the present state of existence, can be seen no more in it; we must go to them; but they cannot return to us.

Yet, to shew that grief is vain, is to afford very little comfort; yet this is all that reason can afford; but religion, our only friend in the moment of distress, in the moment when the help of man is vain, when fortitude and cowardice sink down together, and the sage and the virgin mingle their lamentations; religion will inform us, that sorrow and complaint are not only vain, but unreasonable and erroneous. The voice of God, speaking by his Son and his Apostles, will instruct us, that she, whose departure we now mourn, is not dead,

but sleepeth; that only her body is committed to the ground; but that the soul is returned to God, who gave it; that God, who is infinitely merciful, who hateth nothing that he has made, who desireth not the death of a sinner; to that God, who only can compare performance with ability, who alone knows how far the heart has been pure, or corrupted, how inadvertency has surprised, fear has betrayed, or weakness has impeded; to that God, who marks every aspiration after a better state, who hears the prayer which the voice cannot utter, records the purpose that perished without opportunity of action, the wish that vanished away without attainment, who is always ready to receive the penitent, to whom sincere contrition is never late, and who will accept the tears of a returning sinner.

Such are the reflections to which we are called by the voice of truth; and from these we shall find that comfort which philosophy cannot supply, and that peace which the world cannot give. The contemplation of the mercy of God may justly afford some consolation, even when the office of burial is performed to those who have been snatched away without visible amendment of their lives: for, who shall presume to determine the state of departed souls, to lay open what God hath concealed, and to search the counsels of the Most Highest?—But, with more confident hope of pardon and acceptance, may we commit those to the receptacles of mortality, who have lived without any open or enormous crimes; who have endeavoured to propitiate God by repentance, and have died, at last, with hope and resignation. Among these she surely may be remembered, whom we have followed hither to the tomb, to pay her the last

honours, and to resign her to the grave: she, whom many, who now hear me, have known, and whom none, who were capable of distinguishing either moral or intellectual excellence, could know, without esteem, or tenderness. To praise the extent of her knowledge, the acuteness of her wit, the accuracy of her judgment, the force of her sentiments, or the elegance of her expression, would ill suit with the occasion.

Such praise would little profit the living, and as little gratify the dead, who is now in a place where vanity and competition are forgotten forever; where she finds a cup of water given for the relief of a poor brother, a prayer uttered for the mercy of God to those whom she wanted power to relieve, a word of instruction to ignorance, a smile of comfort to misery, of more avail than all those accomplishments which confer honour and distinction among the sons of folly.—Yet, let it be remembered, that her wit was never employed to scoff at goodness, nor her reason to dispute against truth. In this age of wild opinions, she was as free from scepticism as the cloistered virgin. She never wished to signalize herself by the singularity of paradox. She had a just diffidence of her own reason, and desired to practise rather than to dispute. Her practice was such as her opinions naturally produced. She was exact and regular in her devotions, full of confidence in the divine mercy, submissive to the dispensations of Providence, extensively charitable in her judgments and opinions, grateful for every kindness that she received, and willing to impart assistance of every kind to all whom her little power enabled her to benefit. She passed through many months of languor, weakness and decay, without a single mur-

mur of impatience, and often expressed her adoration of that mercy which granted her so long time for recollection and penitence. That she had no failings, cannot be supposed: but she has now appeared before the Almighty Judge; and it would ill become beings like us, weak and sinful as herself, to remember those faults which, we trust, eternal purity has pardoned.

Let us therefore preserve her memory for no other end but to imitate her virtues; and let us add her example to the motives to piety which this solemnity was, secondly, instituted to enforce.

It would not indeed be reasonable to expect, did we not know the inattention and perverseness of mankind, that any one who had followed a funeral, could fail to return home without new resolutions of a holy life: for, who can see the final period of all human schemes and undertakings, without conviction of the vanity of all that terminates in the present state? For, who can see the wise, the brave, the powerful, or the beauteous, carried to the grave, without reflection on the emptiness of all those distinctions which set us here in opposition to each other? And, who, when he sees the vanity of all terrestrial advantages, can forbear to wish for a more permanent and certain happiness? Such wishes, perhaps, often arise, and such resolutions are often formed; but, before the resolution can be exerted, before the wish can regulate the conduct, new prospects open before us, new impressions are received; the temptations of the world solicit; the passions of the heart are put into commotion; we plunge again into the tumult, engage again in the contest, and forget, that what we gain cannot be kept; and that the life, for which we are thus busy to provide, must be quickly at an end.

But, let us not be thus shamefully deluded! Let us not thus idly perish in our folly, by neglecting the loudest call of Providence; nor, when we have followed our friends, and our enemies, to the tomb, suffer ourselves to be surprised by the dreadful summons, and die, at last, amazed and unprepared! Let every one whose eye glances on this bier, examine what would have been his condition, if the same hour had called him to judgment, and remember, that, though he is now spared, he may, perhaps, be to-morrow among separate spirits. The present moment is in our power: let us, therefore, from the present moment, begin our repentance! Let us not, any longer, harden our hearts, but hear, this day, the voice of our Saviour and our God, and begin to do, with all our powers, whatever we shall wish to have done, when the grave shall open before us! Let those, who came hither weeping and lamenting, reflect, that they have not time for useless sorrow; that their own salvation is to be secured, and that the day is far spent, and the night cometh, when no man can work, that tears are of no value to the dead, and that their own danger may justly claim their whole attention! Let those who entered this place unaffected and indifferent, and whose only purpose was to behold this funeral spectacle, consider, that she, whom they thus behold with negligence, and pass by, was lately partaker of the same nature with themselves; and that they likewise are hastening to their end, and must soon, by others equally negligent, be buried and forgotten! Let all remember, that the day of life is short, and that the day of grace may be much shorter; that this may be the last warning which God will grant us, and that, perhaps, he, who

looks on this grave unalarmed, may sink unreformed into his own!

Let it, therefore, be our care, when we retire from this solemnity, that we immediately turn from our wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right; that, whenever disease, or violence, shall dissolve our bodies, our souls may be saved alive, and received into everlasting habitations; where, with Angels and Archangels, and all the glorious Host of Heaven, they shall sing glory to God on high, and the Lamb, forever and ever.

A SERMON

ON RELIGIOUS CONSOLATION,

BY THE REV. R. MOREHEAD, A. M.

OF BALIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD, JUNIOR MINISTER OF THE EPISCOPAL CHAPEL, COWGATE, EDINBURGH.

In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.—*Matt.* ii. 18.

THESE words, my brethren, of the prophet Jeremiah, are applied, as you know, by the holy evangelist, to that very extraordinary and horrible incident which he relates in this chapter: the massacre of the young children, perpetrated by Herod, in the hope that the infant king of the Jews would thus be sacrificed to his jealous fury. In this expectation he was disappointed by the overruling hand of Providence; and we who, in a distant age and country, meet at this day for the purposes of religion, in the name of the child who was then spared, know, I trust, in what manner to value and to adore that watchful goodness, which, while it permitted the hearts of the mothers of Bethlehem to bleed, was yet laying firm, for all future generations of men, the foundation of their happiness and their hopes. To such extensive views of divine Providence, it is the delight of religion to conduct the serious mind, and to

clothe, with a mantle of celestial light, the most melancholy appearances which this lower world exhibits. In the first instance, indeed, nature fixes our thoughts on the appearances alone; and when, as in the incident before us, we read of the mandate which the tyrant "*sent forth to slay all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under*," we can, for a time, listen to no voice, except that which long before had resounded in the ears of the prophet, "*the voice of lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted.*"

In the hour in which I speak,* my brethren, such a voice, I fear, is but too frequent in the houses of our city; and many a tear is now falling from the eyes of parents over the lifeless remains of infant innocence and beauty. The same God, who, on one memorable occasion, permitted a bloody tyrant to be the minister of his inscrutable designs, in the destruction of holy innocents, more frequently sends disease among the young of his people; and, year after year, as at the present hour, many a spotless soul returns to him, untried by the dangers, and unpolluted by the sins of that earthly course, on which it had begun to enter. It is an hour in which even religion must, for a time, be still, and listen, with sacred respect, to the voice of nature, which, even in its excesses of "*lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning*," is yet the voice of God in the human heart. When she may speak, however, Religion can utter the words of consolation; and it is her office to seize upon those hours when the hearts of some are

* February, 1808, when the disease of the measles was fatally prevalent.

broken with affliction, and when many are trembling with apprehension, and to press those lessons of wisdom, which are heard too often with indifference, in the pride and the gayety of common life.

The sentiment expressed in the text, my brethren, accords with the feelings of human nature. The death of young children excites, perhaps, more "*lamentation and great mourning*," than any other incident in the course of mortality. To those who are not parents, a dispensation of this kind may seem, perhaps, of a much less afflicting nature than many others. A child is but an insignificant object in the eye of the world, and seems but a trifling loss to society. To a parent, however, those very circumstances, which render his child of little value to others, are the most attractive. It is his delight to retire from the serious cares and busy occupations of men, into the unanxious scenes of childish playfulness; to repose his thoughts upon some countenances on which the world has left no traces of care, and vice has impressed no marks of disorder; and to find within his own house, and sprung from his own loins, some forms which recall the image of primæval innocence, and anticipate the society of heaven. When these innocent beings are torn from us, we suffer a calamity with which a stranger, indeed, will imperfectly sympathize, but of which the heart knoweth the bitterness; and the sorrow may only be the deeper, and more heartfelt, that it must be disguised and smothered from an unpitying world.

The death of a young person, advanced to years of maturity, occasions a general sympathy. The grief of

parents is then at once felt and understood. When talents, which gave the promise of future distinction, and virtues, to which the declining years of a parent clung for support, are torn from the domestic circle which they blessed and adorned, there are few hearts so much closed to a fellow-feeling with human calamity, as not to be powerfully affected with such circumstances of deep distress. But this very sympathy of mankind is a source of consolation which alleviates the affliction by which it is occasioned. The sorrow excited by the death of a young child may often be as acute, but it is attended with much less sympathy. Here, too, parents have formed hopes which are only, perhaps, the greater and more unbounded, inasmuch as the foundation on which they rest is less certain and definite. These hopes are frustrated forever; their child is as if he had never been; even his memory has disappeared from every heart but their own; and they cherish it with the deeper feeling, that there is no other breast in which it dwells.

To such sorrows of the heart, my brethren, it is the office of religion to apply the words of consolation; and when the first tumults of grief are at an end, to inspire the soul of the mourner with loftier sentiments. She suggests, in the first place, that, in the kingdom of God, there is no loss of existence; that the hand of infinite wisdom changes, indeed, the sphere of action in which the rational soul is destined to move, but never deprives it of the being which the hand of beneficence bestowed. She points to a higher world, in which the inhabitants are "*as little children;*" and she hesitates not to affirm, that the soul of infant innocence finds its

way to that region of purity, the air of which it seemed to breathe while yet below. She speaks here with a voice of confidence which may sometimes fail to be inspired, even from the contemplation of a long life spent in the practice of virtue. The best men have contracted many failings in the course of their earthly trial; and when we commit their bodies to the dust, while religion calls upon us to look forward to their final destiny with holy hope, she yet permits some foreboding fears to cloud the brightness of the prospect. In less favourable cases, all we can do is to withdraw our minds from the vices of the departed, and rather to fix them, with apprehension and purposes of amendment, upon our own; to raise our thoughts, at the same time, to the perfect goodness of God, which seeth the secret springs of the heart, and judges not as man judges; which will forgive whatever can be forgiven, and which hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked. But when we follow to the grave the body of untried innocence, we at the same time restore to the Father of spirits the soul which he gave, yet unpolluted by the vices of time, and still an inmate meet for eternity. When the tears of nature are over, faith may here look up with an unclouded eye, and see the Saviour, whose descent upon earth cost so many tears to the mothers of Bethlehem, now speaking comfort to the mothers of his people, and telling them, that he who here below "*suffered little children to come unto him*," still delights to throw around them the arms of his love, when, like him, they have burst the bonds of mortality.

Besides this lofty source of consolation which religion opens up to afflicted parents, she, in the second

place, suggests to them some of the wise purposes which Providence may have in view in this afflicting dispensation. Although the ways of Heaven are confessedly dark, and although we must, in many instances, bow down in resignation, without pretending to examine them, it is yet more pleasing when we can discover some of the designs which may be intended, and we are thus more easily reconciled to the evils which may accompany the execution of them. In the death of children, Providence seems, on a hasty glance, to be acting in a manner contradictory to its own plan; to be destroying life ere it is well begun; to be depriving us of blessings which we can scarcely be said to have tasted; and while with one hand it gives, with another to be taking away. Let it, however, be considered, that it answers an important purpose in the government of the world, to keep men in mind of the constant sovereignty of God, and of his right to the entire disposal of the fate of his creatures. Let it farther be recollected, that we are prone to forget the hand from which our blessings flow, and that too often we do not discern its agency till these blessings are withdrawn. It is thus not an unpleasing aspect of the ways of Providence, to consider the death of a child as an interposition of God, by which he awakens the slumbering piety of the parent, and, by depriving him of the object of his mortal affections, leads his thoughts to immortality.

We are all well aware, my brethren, of the influence of the world: we know how strongly it engages our thoughts, and debases the springs of our actions: we all know how important it is to have the spirits of our minds renewed, and the rust which gathers over them

cleared away. One of the principal advantages, perhaps, which arises from the possession of children, is, that in their society the simplicity of our nature is constantly recalled to our view; and that, when we return from the cares and thoughts of the world into our domestic circle, we behold beings whose happiness springs from no false estimates of worldly good, but from the benevolent instincts of nature. The same moral advantage is often derived, in a greater degree, from the memory of those children who have left us. Their simple characters dwell upon our minds with a deeper impression; their least actions return to our thoughts with more force than if we had it still in our power to witness them; and they return to us clothed in that saintly garb which belongs to the possessors of a higher existence. We feel that there is now a link connecting us with a purer and a better scene of being; that a part of ourselves has gone before us into the bosom of God; and that the same happy creature which here on earth showed us the simple sources from which happiness springs, now hovers over us, and scatters from its wings the graces and beatitudes of eternity.

To you, then, my brethren, who have suffered from the present visitation of Providence, religion thus unfolds the sources of consolation and of improvement. She calls upon you not to mourn as those who have no hope; to give the children of whom you have been deprived into the hands of your and their Father; and when the first pangs of affliction are over, to lift up your thoughts with that faith toward him, which may at last enable you to meet them in his presence forever. Yet while she calls you not to mourn, she does not ask you

to forget. This perhaps may be the language of the world. The loftier language of religion is, that you should remember whatever may contribute to your purity and virtue; that you should sometimes meditate with holy emotion on those angel forms which are gone before you; and that, amidst the temptations of the world, you should call to mind, that their eyes are now impending over you, and feel the additional link which binds you to the higher destinations of your being.

To us, my brethren, over whose houses the angel of death may now have passed, let not the scene which we have witnessed be unaccompanied with instruction. While we fall down in gratitude before Heaven, for the deliverance which we have hitherto experienced, let us confess that it is undeserved; that we have not, as we ought, blessed the giver of all our good; and let us henceforth resolve to have his goodness more constantly in our thoughts. Let us sympathize with our brethren in affliction, and feel that their sorrow may soon be ours. Above all, let us make it our firm resolution, to train up those children whom God may have spared to us, in the knowledge of him and of his laws, that at whatever hour of their future life the call may come, they may be found of him in peace, and that we too may, with them, glorify him in Heaven.

EXTRACT FROM THE MOURNER,

BY BENJAMIN GROSVENOR, D. D.

HELP AGAINST IMMODERATE GRIEF WITH RESPECT TO THE PERSONS DEPARTED.

Had not God a property in them as well as you, prior to yours, and superior? They were his, before they were yours: They are his, now they were no longer yours; by a thousand obligations, ties, and relations, that ought to take place of all our claims and pretensions.

Should they have been immortal here, only to please you? to have lived, though weary of it; to have staid, though longing to be gone; and in misery, though fit for happiness? Should they be kept in the troubles of life, in the pains of sickness, and the infirmities of age; or at best, in the insipid repetition of the same round of things, only to prevent a vacancy in any of your amusements or delights? *Is this thy kindness to thy friend?*

Some parting time must come; why not this? If the time of parting with them was left to our choice, it would greatly increase our confusion.

They are not extinct and gone out of being. Their manner of existence is changed, but the existence itself is not lost. *They that are fallen asleep in Christ, are not perished.* 1 Cor. xv. 18. They are not blotted out of being, nor out of life, upon our Christian scheme.

The degree of happiness in their present state of separation, whatever it is, affords a comfortable thought. If they are absent from you, and from their own bodies, they are *present with the Lord;* which, I suppose, you will allow to be *far better.* So much better indeed, that for the sake of entering into it, it is worth a good man's while to die at any time, and leave any company upon earth, though ever so pleasant or good.

The spirit, that returns to God who gave it, is received by God, and welcomed in a manner suitable to the relation and character in which it arrives there. *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours.* They could have little or no rest here, what with labour and trouble, temptation and sin. What a vast improvement in knowledge must a disencumbered soul make in such a situation? *Now we see darkly, as through a glass; but then face to face.* If the pleasure be not so complete as after the resurrection, it must, however, be unspeakable, beyond all that this world affords. They are sure of their own salvation, and of being the heirs of glory. And if the pleasure of assurance here be so transporting, as to give sometimes a *joy unspeakable and full of glory;* while we say with the apostle, *we know and have believed the love which God hath towards us;* what will it be for a soul to find itself safely landed in the world of perfection? Among spirits of just men made perfect; freed from all imperfections, natural and sinful; returned to their native soil, having left that foreign country where they were *pilgrims and strangers,* and got home to their father's house, *where there are many mansions?* In the best society and company, as well

as the best place? Reviewing past dangers and labours? Admiring the wisdom of God, and his goodness that has brought them thither; and especially the goodness of that stroke we are mourning over here? Their worship must needs be spiritual, who are all spirit; without weariness, failure, or interruption. They have glorious scenes at present before them, and pleasing expectations of great and more glorious things: Such as the accomplishing the number of the elect, and all that shall be saved; the fulfilling the great periods of prophecy that remain; the downfall of antichrist; the glorious appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ; the resurrection of the body; the abolition of death, and the solemn coronation of all the conquerors through *the blood of the Lamb*, to a kingdom that can never be shaken.

Is this a condition to be lamented with incessant tears? Is it for people who are in such a case as this that we go up and down in black, with downcast looks and weeping eyes? What one article of this happiness aforesaid is not worth more than the longest life of pleasure and honour in the world? One would think that these things only wanted to be believed and thought on. Would we fetch them back from this condition if we could? I am afraid we are so selfish, that if the resurrection power were lodged in our hands for one day, we should immediately run to the graves of our dear departed, and fetch them back again. To stop our own sorrows for a while, we should begin theirs afresh, and bring them back to misery. They no sooner enter heaven, but they wish they had been sooner there. And the next wish is, that we may be with them too as soon as may be; and yet we wish a quite contrary way.

I think of the happy meeting again, which all the world shall not be able to hinder after a few days are past. Let us not behave as if we were never to meet again. Do not mourn *as without hope*. Our religion teacheth us to believe, that in the separate state we shall not be without the society of our departed godly relations and friends. The separate soul of the beggar, Lazarus, is represented as in the company, nay, in the bosom of his father Abraham; and the penitent thief was promised to be with Christ in Paradise. The spirits of just men are not perfected in order to be an assembly of mutes: nor is it likely they should be strangers to one another, when conversation in this imperfect world produces acquaintance and social endearment.

There will indeed be different ranks and orders of saints; different degrees of reward there, as of holiness here, and consequently of apartments and situations. But is it not the same in this world? Is every one in the same rank and station; of the same character, or title and endowments? And yet we know one another, and converse together; a great deal of the beauty and pleasure of society arising from this variety, as it will also there.

At the resurrection you shall meet again in your glorified bodies, as well as perfect spirits. For, *all that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him;* and will *change their vile bodies, and make them like his own glorious body. It was sown a natural body; it shall be raised a spiritual body*, freed from all elementary dross; will feel no pain, can need no food; will never be weary, however exercised or employed; without any appetites that tend to inordinacy. Our bodies then will be immortal. *The children of the resurrection die no more.* Incorruptible;

sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. You will meet them with all these improvements, and to all these degrees far more delightful than ever.

God will bring them with him as part of his glorious train; when Christ shall *be glorified in all his saints, and admired in all that believe;* as the trophies of all his conquests, the vessels of his grace, the members of his body, the spouse of his love, the shining instances of his faithfulness and power, the assessors of his court of judgment, and partakers of his glory.

How joyful will that meeting be? How happy? How glorious? Never to part more! You were not always together here; but you shall be always together after that meeting. The parting kiss, the word *farewell*, have no more room forever. This meeting together again is what Christ purchased: *for to this end Christ died and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living.* Rom. xiv. 9. This meeting together again is what the word of God has promised: *for, this we say unto you, by the word of the Lord, that we shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.* 1 Thess. iv. 15.

This is what the great God hath promised, and is very well able to perform. *He is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy.* Jude 24. And *they that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.* 1 Thess. iv. 14. The return of Christ, and of those who sleep in him, have the same grounds of credibility. *If we believe that Christ died and rose again*, then if you believe one, you may believe the other: nay, you must and ought to be-

lieve the other, upon the credit of the same evidence and authority. *For if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is not Christ risen.* 1 Cor. xv. 13. This general meeting is designed for general satisfaction. John xiv. 20. *At that day ye shall know.* God the father will see, with satisfaction, the work of his hands in perfection, made fit to receive the communication of his endearments. The Lord Jesus Christ *will see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied* in the full accomplishment of his design, in their complete felicity. The Holy Spirit will see, with satisfaction, the final success of his operations, in our perfect holiness and happiness. Angels will be pleased to see the success of their ministrations; and gladly welcome us, the partners of their joys. And as to ourselves, what an inexpressible reciprocation of endearing love, and multiplied joy, to find ourselves all met together after our parting sorrows? When all things and persons, any way offensive, shall be gathered out and thrown aside? No falsehood, rancour, partiality, mistake, prejudice, infirmity, passion or pride shall be met with there; nor any thing to hinder the heavenly pleasure circulating through every heart, and dwelling upon every face and tongue. You do not mourn as those in Acts xx. 35. *Sorrowing, because they should see his face no more.*

Of immoderate grief, we may say, as Solomon does of extravagant mirth, *what doth it?* What doth it for them who are gone, or for you? It may do us much hurt, but can do them no good. It may weaken our bodies, and damage our health; it may sadden our spirits, deprive us of the comforts of life, and indispose us for the duties of it. And what then? What advantage to the departed from so costly a sacrifice to their memory?

Do they need your tears, who have forever taken leave of weeping? Could your cries call back the departed spirit, and awaken the body into life? Could you water the plant with your tears till it revived; you might weep like a cloud, and call nothing excessive that was likely to prove successful. But there are no *Elijahs* now, who may stretch themselves upon the child, and bring back the soul. It is more reasonable to conclude with David; *now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.* 2 Sam. xii. 23.

But if we could, would we have them walk over the precipice once more? Would we have them fight the battle over again, run the race again, be tempted, sin, and suffer again? Should they come back for our gratification, from that holy place to this place of sin? From that happy place to this place of trouble? From joy to sorrow, from rest and peace to new vexations? Their sentiments are different, their affections raised and ennobled; and, as well as they loved you, they would not come back to you for all this world: and, as well as you loved them, you cannot, it seems, wish them joy of their new elevation and dignity. Should not our godly friends be allowed to wear the crown they have been fighting for, and the prize for which they have been running?

HELP AGAINST INORDINATE SORROW, FROM SOME CONSIDERATIONS WITH REGARD TO OURSELVES.

SELF-LOVE is at the bottom of our sorrow. I have lost a pleasure, and an advantage. I am mourning over the living rather than the dead. If one, every way the

same, would make me easy, the sorrow is not for the departed, but for myself who survives.*

No strange thing has befallen me; nothing but what is common to men. It is no more strange that a man should die, than that he should be born. Am I better than my fathers, who are dead and gone? *Whom makest thou thyself?* Where is the sense and reason of pretending to an exemption from the common lot of mankind? *Beloved, think it not strange, as if some strange thing had happened unto you.* 1 Pet. iv. 12. For this is no strange thing that a mortal should die.

I come into a family, and see one in a corner weeping and sighing; another is fallen upon a couch, unable to hold up the head; another is run up to a chamber, like David, to weep and cry out, *Oh Absalom; my son, my son.* What is the matter? Why, one that was born to die, is dead! Was it the first child, or husband, that ever died? No. Had you a patent from heaven against the common lot? No. Would you have had God made him immortal to please you? *He teareth himself in his anger. Shall the rock be removed out of its place for you?* Job xviii. 4.

How many mercies and comforts are continued to thee, that might also have been taken away? and how many troubles prevented, that might have befallen you? You have lost some children; it might have been all. You have lost all; it might have been your husband too, or wife, at the same time. You have lost husband, or wife; it might have been also estate, and

* *Cicero on the loss of Scipio.* Nihil enim mali accidesse *Scipioni* puto; mihi accidit, si quid accidit. Suis autem incommodis graviter angi, non amicum, sed seipsum amantis est. *De Amic.*

all the means of subsistence. Or suppose that is gone too; you have liberty, health, peace, and friends. Or suppose they are also gone; you are out of hell, and within reach of heaven: which, I will say, is a greater thing than any you have lost, or all these put together. Pardon of sin, and peace with God, may still be yours.

Mourner. These, I fear, are not mine.

Answer. Nay, then it is time to mourn over something else than a dead friend. To mourn over a dead soul of your own, to mourn over a lost God, to sorrow for sin; these are infinitely more to your purpose than sorrowing for the dead. And there is at least this room to rejoice, that all these spiritual blessings *may be had.* You may be pardoned, accepted, sanctified, and saved. And it is a matter of great comfort that these things are possible and within reach.

Mourner. But I would have had these spiritual blessings, with the life and enjoyment also of those that are gone.

Answer. That is, you would have every thing according to your desire and fancy; that God and providence should take their orders from you, and consult your liking, before they execute their decrees. But, *should it be according to thy mind!* Job xxxiv. 33. He that has a pillow to lay his head upon, and yet (as one says) will needs lay it upon a stone; he that has many convenient seats to sit upon, and nothing will serve him but a bush of thorns; surely they must be very much in love with sorrow and melancholy, who enjoy so many blessings, and yet will slight all the pleasures of them, to pine away in the company of their wants. Understand what you now possess, as you would do if it were taken away, and then you will have a better relish for it.

The miseries and troubles entailed on the posterity of Adam are numerous. They are compared to the sparks that fly up, for number. It is a mercy we escape any of them: that all these sparks do not kindle upon us together: that all these troubles do not seize upon us at once: that out of so many miseries we should have so few, when we are born to all, by descent; subject to all by nature; deserving of all by sin.

Do you forget what your sins deserve? *Shall a living man complain; a man for the punishment of his sin?* Lam. iii. 39. *A living man*, when you might have been dead; *for the punishment of sin*, and you might have been damned? The punishment of sin, on this side of hell, is always less than our iniquities deserve.

Mourner. *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.*

Answer. "Let every man, says one, when he computes what he wants of his desires, reckon as exactly how far he is short in his duty; and when he has duly pondered both, he will think it a very easy composition, though his wants should be unsupplied, provided his sins be pardoned; and will see cause to sit down contentedly with honest *Mephibosheth.* 2 Sam. xix. 23. *What right have I yet to cry any more to the king?*"

The good of affliction in general ought to be taken into the account, as another consideration to assuage our griefs. *He for our profit* chastises, says the Apostle; and *it was good for me that I was afflicted*, says David.

Afflictions have a tendency to awaken our repentance; to stir us up to *search and try our ways, in order to turn our feet unto God's testimonies. I will go*

and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence. In their affliction they will seek me early. Hos. v. 15. And so it proved, Hos. vi. 1. *Come let us return to the Lord: He hath torn us, and he will heal; he hath broken us, and he will bind us up.* They help to wean us from this world, and make us more willing to depart. As we must needs be less fond of the world, the more troublesome it is to us; and as it makes our dying the more easy and more welcome, to have sent those before us for whose sake we might desire to live, and with whom we desire to be; we have fewer ties and engagements to earth. The fibres being cut off, and the roots loosened, the tree falls with greater ease.

Afflictions bring us to thoughtfulness and consideration, when all other means in the world can hardly do it. A man that can sit at a sermon as unmoved as if the joys of heaven, the sorrows of hell, and the eternity of both were no part of his concern: the excellency of God, the vanity of the world, the deformity of sin, and the beauty of holiness, shall leave him unmoved, if not asleep; he little regards the message, or the messenger: but let God send one of Job's messengers to tell him such a ship is lost, his house is burnt, or such a dear relation is dead; presently he is awake, and has more thoughts of heart in an hour, than he had before in a month.

The patient bearing of such afflictions, and the sanctified improvement of them, is one mark of our sonship, and the love of God to us. Should you lose the comfort of such an evidence by impatience? Heb. xii. 7. *If ye endure chastening, he dealeth with you as with sons. To endure,* seems to signify more than merely to

be chastised; namely, to accept the chastisement, as from the hand of God, and to bear it with becoming decency and patience. There is one remark more, proper for some mourners, from these words: *If ye endure chastening, he dealeth with you as with sons.* What a mistake is it then to say, "If I was a child of God, he would not deal with me in such a manner;" when the text says, *If ye endure chastening, he dealeth with you as with sons?*

Affliction, well sustained, improves every part of our religion. It teaches compassion and sympathy towards others in their troubles. It gives an edge to our devotions, an ardency to our prayers, tenderness to our heart, and a life to our graces: it is the trial and triumph of our faith. Patience hath its perfect work: our resolutions for God are confirmed; so that we take faster hold of God, and of those things that cannot be taken from us.

Our sorrows, at longest, are but short; and we shall shortly ourselves go the same way. How diminutively does the Apostle speak of the afflictions of this present time? *Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment.* 2 Cor. iv. 17. You call them *heavy*, he calls them *light;* and those light afflictions but *for a moment;* and that moment of light afflictions *worketh for us.* You are apt to think they all work *against* you, but they work *for* you *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* The contrast lies between *affliction* and *glory; light* affliction, and the *weight* of glory; a light affliction for a *moment*, and a weight of glory *eternal:* spoken as much like an orator as like an apostle. And who was it that said all this? One that knew as well what affliction

was, one that had as much of it to his share, as any man in the world. *In labours more abundant; in stripes above measure; in prisons more frequent; in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I was in the deep. In journeyings often; in perils of waters; in perils of robbers; in perils by mine own countrymen; in perils by the heathen; in perils in the city; in perils in the wilderness; in perils in the sea; in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness; in watchings often; in hunger and thirst; in fasting often; in cold and nakedness: besides the care of all the churches.* 2 Cor. xi. And yet, *light afflictions!*

The time is short: it remains, that they that weep, should be as if they wept not. 1 Cor. vii. *The end of all things is at hand.* I shall shortly know myself what it is to change worlds. It is more to the purpose to prepare for my own death, than fruitlessly to lament that of another. And to make sure of meeting my godly friends, is more now my business than to lose time in bewailing their parting. *Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draws nigh.* James v. 8.

It will be a double loss to lose the dear relations, and to lose the benefit of the affliction too: it is enough to have lost *them*. Shall I lose the spiritual advantage that might be gained by such a trial, and into which it might be improved?

Patient submission gives the surest possession of ourselves, and the best enjoyment of every thing else. *In patience we possess our souls.* Luke xxi. 19. Without it, we have lost possession of ourselves: and he that

does not enjoy himself, can enjoy nothing else; for whatever is poured into a tainted vessel is all spoiled.

It is a dangerous thing to provoke God by obstinate grief, *lest a worse thing come unto us.* For he has said, *With the froward, I will show myself froward.* Psa. xviii. 26. *He that hath a froward heart, findeth no good.* Prov. xvii. 20. *Thorns and briers are in the way of the froward. He that keeps his soul* (quiet and submissive) *shall be free from them.* Prov. xxii. 5. And after this, *Do I well to be angry?* Would any one choose to walk upon thorns and briers, that could pick out an easier path? Where one tear falls upon the account of complying with God's will, a multitude fall in consequence of having our own will. Not only the miseries of this life, but the eternal miseries of the life to come, are owing to this unresigned self-will. It may be written on many a tomb, *Here lies the body of N. N. because he would have his own will.*

HELP AGAINST IMMODERATE GRIEF, FROM CONSIDERATIONS WITH RESPECT TO OTHERS, AND THE WORLD ABOUT US.

Compare your case with that of others, and you may easily observe more miserable and mournful ones. There are a thousand persons with whom you would not change conditions. By what law is it, that you must only gaze at those above you, and take no notice of those below? That you must look on him only who is carried on men's shoulders, and think it a fine thing to be so mounted, but never consider the poor men that carry him, whose place you would by no means accept of? "You look with a greedy eye upon such a one's wealth," says bishop Patrick, "would you have it with

his cares and fears, his conscience and mind? his ignorance; perhaps his folly and vices? his ill taste of things, and incapacity of intellectual pleasures? his uncomfortable prospects?"

Mourner. No! I would be myself what I am, with the addition of what I want.

Answer. Are you sure of continuing what you are with that addition? Since no one can have all things, is not yours a good lot? What pretences have you for every good thing to centre in yourself? Was it always well with you as it is now? Formerly you had no being: formerly you had none of those relations or possessions you now lament. You have lost that which some never had. Can you say, you had rather never have had them than to lose them? If it was a good thing, the having it for a time was a greater good than not to have it at all.

Compare yourself with the miserable sorrows and sufferings of others. You will find such a one has lost her pretty children; and at the same time a loving husband, that was better to her than ten sons. Another has lost a near relation, and with that near relation away went the means of subsistence. The sons of Zedekiah were slain before his face; and then his own eyes were put out, and he himself led into captivity. 2 Kings xxv. David had the mortification of a beloved son dying in actual rebellion against his father, his prince, and against his God. How much more terrible was that, than to close his eyes in a peaceful way? The mother of the Maccabees saw her seven sons tormented to death before her face, and she afterwards herself underwent the same. The sufferings of the primitive Christians, how

grievous! The patient resignation of our English martyrs to be burnt, how remarkable, how affecting, how glorious! If mankind were to bring together all their several troubles and calamities, in all their circumstances of good and bad that attended them, and lay them in one common heap, on this condition, that when they had so done, every man was to come again to take up an equal portion of the miseries of life, and divide them equally; a great many who now complain would gladly take up what they brought, and go away contented.

What if the great God designs that others who look on should have the benefit of my example and good behaviour under such a trial as this? Hath he not a right to use me for such a purpose? And does it not become me to comport with it, and behave accordingly? Job lost his children, his estate, his health, and, in some measure, his reputation with his friends; his ease and peace; and all this to show the world a pattern of patience: shall others have no benefit from the example of our behaviour? Though God can never want a cause of inflicting evil where sin is; yet this shows, that sin is not always the cause. *Hast thou considered my servant Job*, says God to Satan, *that there is none like him in the earth, although thou movest me against him, to destroy him without a cause.* Job ii. 3.

This resignation is the most distinguishing character of a Christian; that which does most undoubtedly distinguish good men from bad. The externals of religion cannot do it, because they are common to the hypocrite and to the sincere. The hypocrite can hear and read, sing psalms and pray, and receive sacraments as the true Christian does, and administer them too,

and preach; but to give up the will to God at his disposal, and obey his will, is what no hypocrite can do, and continue such: for it is the essence of hypocrisy to pretend only to let God have our will, and yet resolve to have our own. And it is the evidence of sincerity to be thankful if God will let us have our own will; but contented with his, and submissive to it. All other parts of religion, I say, lie in common. If you hear sermons ever so attentively, the hypocrite will sit as demurely: *they sit before me as my people sit. Herod heard John gladly, and did many things.* If you pray fervently and frequently, the hypocrite may be as frequent, long, and copious. The *Pharisees, for a pretence, made long prayers.* You cannot come to the sacrament oftener, nor behave with more devotion than they do. Judas sat down with the twelve. If you entertain good discourse with great readiness in the scripture language, the hypocrite can do the same. Men may preach to others, and be cast away themselves; may be companions to good men, as Demas was to Paul, and yet be *lovers of this present world*, so as to forsake the disciples for it. Men may be any thing, and do any thing short of this resigned will to God, and yet be no Christians. But the surrender of our will to God, is a sacrifice of that sort, which demonstrates him that makes it to be a Christian indeed.

The children of wrath are described from their not having resigned their will to God; *fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind*, Eph. ii. 3. that is, their own wills, and not God's; their own wills, in opposition to God's. And, *they have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds.* Jer. v. 5. *Let us cast away*

his cords from us, and break his bonds in sunder. Psalm ii. The children of God, on the contrary, are described from the entire surrender of their will to God. *As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts*, not acting merely according to your own will; *but, as he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.* David was a man *after God's own heart, and served his generation according to the will of God;* while others are described as *walking after their own imagination and lust.* Jer. xxiii. 17.

The Devil will let you have as much religion as you please, without this; because he knows all religion, that leaves the will of man unresigned to God, will never rescue the soul out of his hands.

Immoderate passion, for losing or gaining any thing in this world, is a reproach to religion, to good principles, and the best prospects in the world. As if these were not sufficient to bear us up, and to bear us out; or to make an ample amends for the loss of any comfort. As if God, with all his perfections, and Heaven, with all its glories, were nothing: no, nothing to that child, that husband, that wife, that estate. I have seen a grief so stubborn and savage as to prove insensible to all the principles and prospects that could be mentioned.

In such cases we fall short of many excellent heathens. We are outdone by those with whom we are ashamed to be compared, considering all things. Some of them had noble sentiments under the loss of estates, relations or friends. Zeno lost all in a shipwreck: he protested it was the best voyage he ever made in his life, because it proved the occasion of betaking himself

to the study of virtue and philosophy. Seneca says, he enjoyed his relations as one that was to lose them; and lost them, as one who had them still in possession. A Spartan woman had five sons in the army, on the day of battle. When a soldier came running from the camp to the city to bring tidings, she, waiting at the gate to hear his report, asked, "What news?" says the messenger, "thy five sons are slain." "You fool," says she, "I did not ask after them. How goes it in the field of battle?" "Why," says the messenger, "we have gained the victory: Sparta is safe." "Then let us be thankful," says she, "to the gods for our deliverance and continued freedom!"

Seneca speaks to God in such language as this; "I only want to know your will: as soon as I know what that is, I am always of the same mind. I do not say you have taken from me; that looks as if I were unwilling; but that you have accepted from me, which I am ready to offer."

A SERMON

BY WILLIAM SMITH, D. D.

LATE PROVOST OF THE COLLEGE AND ACADEMY OF PHILADELPHIA.

ON THE DEATH OF A BELOVED PUPIL.

O my God! my soul is cast down within me, therefore will I remember thee.—*Psalm*, xliii. 6.

It is elegantly said by the author of the book of Job,* who seems to have experienced all the dire vicissitudes of fortune, "That man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards."

These troubles, however, as the same author further observes, serve the wisest purposes, inasmuch as they are not the effects of what is called blind chance, but of that unerring Providence, which graciously conducts all events to the general good of the creature, and the final completion of virtue and happiness. "Affliction comes not forth from the dust, neither does trouble spring out of the ground." Very far from it. At that great day, when the whole council of God shall be more perfectly displayed to us, we shall be fully convinced, that all his dispensations have been wise, righteous, and gracious; and that† "though no chastening for the present seems

* Ch. v. 6. † Heb. xii. 11.

joyous, but grievous, nevertheless it afterwards yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised hereby."

Of the truth of this we might indeed soon be convinced, at present, were we but wise, and suffered ourselves to reflect on what we daily see. 'Tis with the greatest injustice, that men ascribe their sins wholly to worldly temptations, and inveigh upon all occasions against this life on account of its vanities. These, if well attended to, would perhaps put us on our guard against sin; and, upon inquiry, it will be found that the great and general cause of all iniquity, is a stupid listlessness, or want of consideration; which, like some vast weight, oppresses the more generous efforts of the soul, and bears all silently down before it, unless checked by the powerful hand of affliction.

I sincerely pity the man who never tasted of adverse fate; and were I capable of wishing evil to any person, I could not wish a greater to my greatest foe, than a long and uninterrupted course of prosperity. A flattering calm portends a gathering storm; and when the stream glides smooth, deep and silent on, we justly suspect that the sea or some declivity is near, and that it is soon to be lost in the vast ocean, or to tumble down some dreadful fall or craggy precipice.

Such appears his state to be, who never knew an adverse hour, nor took time to consider whence he came, where he is, or whither bound. There is room to be apprehensive lest, being drunk with prosperity, he should swim smoothly from joy to joy along life's short current, till down he drops, through the pit of death, into the vast ocean of eternity! If we loved such a one, what

more charitable wish could we indulge towards him, than that the chastening hand of heaven might fall heavy upon him, arrest him in his thoughtless career, and teach him to pause, ponder, and weigh the moment—the eternal moment—"of the things that belong to his peace, before they are forever hid from his eyes?"

That there should be any persons, endued with reason and understanding, who never found leisure in this world to reflect for what end they were sent into it, would seem incredible, if experience did not assure us of it. There are really so many affecting incidents in life (undoubtedly intended to awaken reflection) that their hearts must be petrified indeed, one would think, and harder than adamant, or the nether millstone, who can live in this world without being sometimes affected, if not with their own, at least with the human, lot.

I hope it is far from being my character, that I am of a gloomy temper, or delight to dwell unseasonably on the dark side of things. Our cup here is bitter enough, and misfortunes sown too thick for any one who loves his species to seek to embitter the draught, by evils of his own creation. But there is a time for all things; and, on some occasions, not to feel, sympathise, and mourn, would argue the most savage nature.

This day every thing that comes from me will be tinctured with melancholy. It is, however, a virtuous melancholy; and therefore, if publicly indulged, I hope it may be thought excusable.

You know it is natural for those who are sincerely afflicted, to believe that every person is obliged to sympathise with them, and attend patiently to the story of their wo. But whether this be your present disposition

or not, I shall say nothing, which you are not as much concerned to receive deeply into your hearts, as I am to pour it from mine.

The general doctrine which I would enforce from the text (previous to my intended application of it) is that a constant feast was never designed for us here, and that it is the good will of our Father that we should be frequently roused by what happens *to* us and *around* us, to remember him, the great fountain of our being; and to cherish that serious reflection and religious sorrow, which may lead us to eternal joy.

That we should observe such a conduct appears highly reasonable in itself. For next to the immediate praises of our great Creator, there is not an exercise that tends more to improve and ennoble the soul, than frequently to cast an eye upon human life, and expatiate on the various scene, till we lead on the soft power of *religious melancholy*, and feel the virtuous purpose gently rising in our sympathising breasts, thrilling through our inmost frame, and starting into the social eye in generous tears.

It would be affronting your understanding to suppose that you think the *melancholy* here recommended, in any manner related to that gloomy despondency into which some people fall. No; my beloved brethren! It is that virtuous reflection, philosophic pensiveness, and religious tenderness of soul, which so well suit the honour of our nature, and our situation in life. And much to be pitied is that man, who thinks such a temper unbecoming his dignity, and whose proud soul pretends never to be cast down from the lofty throne of stoic insensibility.

Such a one, in the sunshine of his prosperity, may arrogantly boast that nothing can move him; and while the world goes well with him, he may remain blind to his error. But let Heaven strip him of his gaudy plumes, and throw him back naked into that world, where he had fixed his heart, he will find to his cost that, though he never had the virtue to be cast down and feel for others, yet he will have the weakness to be cast down and become the most abject despondent thing alive for himself.

When his transient honours are thus fled, his haughty looks will be humbled. He will begin to contemn his past folly, and to enter deeply into his own bosom. He will no more rely on the smiles of fortune, or the flatteries of men; but will acknowledge, from dear bought experience, that, in this life, there is no sure refuge but God, nothing permanent but virtue, and nothing great but an humble heart, and a deep sense of the state of our immortality here.

But besides personal affliction (which is perhaps a last means) the all-gracious Governor of the world, still watchful to turn every event to the good of his creatures, without violating their moral liberty, has many other ways of leading them to the remembrance of himself. Whether we look within or around us, we shall find enough in the prospect to humble our souls, and to convince us that, not trusting to any thing in a world where all enjoyments are fleeting, we shall then only be safe in it, "when we have put on the breast-plate of righteousness, and armed ourselves with the sword of the spirit."*

"Few and evil are the days of our pilgrimage here."† God never intended this world as a lasting habitation for

* Galat. vi. 14, &c. † Gen. xlvii. 9.

us: and, on a just estimate of the things in it, evil will be found so continually blended with good, that we cannot reasonably set our affections much upon it. Wailing, weak and defenceless we are ushered into it. Our youth is a scene of folly and danger; our manhood of care, toil and disappointment. Our old age, if happily we reach old age, is a second childhood. Withered, weak and bowed beneath our infirmities, we become as it were a living hospital of woes: a burden to ourselves, and perhaps an incumbrance to those we love most.

This is the common state of our being. But besides all this, the number of evils in each of these stages is greatly increased, partly by our own misconduct, and partly by our necessary connexions with others. For the equitable judgments of God are often general. "All things come alike to all men; and there is but one event to the righteous and to the wicked?"* Moreover, many of those evils are of such a nature, that no prudence of ours can either foresee or prevent them. All the stages of life necessarily subject us to pains and diseases of body, and many of them to the acuter pains of an anxious mind.

Upon the whole, we may pronounce, from the highest authority, that "our life is but a vapour, which is seen a little while, and then vanisheth away, as a tale that is told and remembered no more; or as a wind that passes over and cometh not again."

The man must be thoughtless, indeed, who is not humbled with these reflections. But suppose his own life should pass over as happily as possible, and he should feel but few of these evils himself; yet unless he shuts his eyes and his ears from the world around him, he must

* 2 Eccles. ix. 2.

still find something in it, which ought to move the tender heart to religious sorrow and remembrance of God.

Our blessed Saviour himself, though more than human, and conscious of no personal ill, cast his eyes upon Jerusalem and wept over it, on account of its impending fate. Just so, if we cast an eye upon the world, we shall drop a tear over it, on account of the unavoidable misfortunes that prevail in it.

Don't we often see tyranny successful, ruthless oppression and persecution ravaging the globe, the best of men made slaves to the worst, and the lovely image of the Deity spurned, dishonoured, disfigured! How many men, of genuine worth, are cast out by fortune to mourn in solitary places, unseen, unpitied; while wickedness riots in the face of day, or pampers in lordly palaces! How many pine in the confinement of dungeons; or are chained down, for offences not their own, to the gallies for life! How many bleed beneath the sword, and bite the ground in all the sad variety of anguish, to sate the cruel ambition of contending masters! How many are deprived of their estates, and disappointed in their most sanguine expectations, by the malice of secret and open enemies, or, which is far more piercing, the treachery of pretended friends! How many boil with all the tortures of a guilty mind, and the bitterest remorse for irreparable injuries! How many pursue each other with the most implacable malice and resentment! How many bring the acutest misery upon themselves by their own intemperance! How many condemn their souls to a kind of hell, even in their own bodies, by an unhappy temper, and the violent commotions of disordered blood! How

many are completely wretched in their families, and constantly galled by the unavoidable misfortunes of their dearest friends!

On one side the distress of the needy, the injuries of the oppressed, the cries of the widow and orphan, pierce our ears. On the other, we hear the voice of lamentation and mourning; our friends and neighbours weeping for dear relations suddenly snatched away, and "Refusing to be comforted because they are not." Here one's heart is torn asunder by having a beloved wife or child snatched from his side! There another bewails the loss of an affectionate parent or brother! Here sturdy manhood drops instantly beneath the sudden stroke! There blooming youth—Ah! my bleeding heart, wring me not thus with streaming anguish—There blooming youth falls a premature victim to a doom seemingly too severe! Beneath the cold hand of death, the roses are blasted; restless agility and vigour are become the tamest things; and beauty, elegance and strength, one putrid lump!

Surely, if we would think on these, and such things which ought not to be the less striking for being common, and which render this life a scene of suffering, a valley of tears, we could not set our hearts much upon it, but should be arrested even in the mid-career of vice, and trembling learn to weigh the moment of things, and secure "the one thing needful." All the tender passions would be awakened in our bosoms. Our sympathising souls would be cast down within us, and, alarmed at their own danger, would fly round from stay to stay, calling incessantly for help, till they could find a sure and never-failing refuge.

But where is this never-failing refuge to be found? It becomes me now to point out some everflowing spring of comfort, some eternal rock of salvation, for the soul, after having thus mustered up such a baleful catalogue of certain miseries, to alarm and humble her.

Now, blessed be the Lord, this refuge is pointed out in the text. In such circumstances, we shall never find rest, but in resolving with the Psalmist—O my God! my soul is cast down within me, therefore will I remember thee."

Without remembering that there is a God, that overrules all events, what hope or comfort could we have, when we reflect on all the aforesaid common miseries of life, and many more that might be named? Did we, with the atheist, believe them to spring up from the dust, or to be the blind effects of unintelligible chance, and of undirected matter and motion, what a poor condition should we think ourselves in here? Would not all appear as "a land of darkness, as darkness itself, under the shadow of death, without any order, where the light is as darkness."*

Surely we could not wish to live in the world upon such a precarious footing as this. And yet we should not know whither to fly from it, unless into the darker state of dreary annihilation, at the thoughts of which the astonished soul shudders and recoils. Upon such a scheme, all our hopes would be thin as the spider's web, and lighter than chaff that is dispersed through the air. Our adversity would hurry us into the most invincible despair, and our prosperity would be as a bubble bursting at

* Job x. 22.

every breath. Philosophy would be a dream, and our boasted fortitude mere unmeaning pretention.

But on the other hand, if, "when our souls are cast down within us, we will remember that there is a God," whose great view in creating was to make us happy, whose design in afflicting is to reclaim us, and who governs the world by his providence only to conduct all to the greatest general good—then, and not till then, we shall have sure footing. We shall neither raise our hopes too high, nor sink them too low. If fortune is kind, we shall enjoy her smiles without forgetting the hand that guides her. If she frowns, we shall feel our woes as men, but shall nobly bear them as Christians. For if we are really Christians, our holy religion teaches us that this scene of things is but a very small part of the mighty scheme of Heaven; that our present life is only the dim dawn of our existence; that we shall shortly put off this load of infirmities and be translated to a state, where "every tear shall be wiped from our eyes, and where there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, because the former things are passed away."*

If we are intimately convinced that unerring wisdom, power, and goodness, hold the reins of the universe, and are at peace in our own consciences, the storm of the world may beat against us; but, though it may shake, it can never overthrow us.

"Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be on the vines; though the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; though the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no

* Rev. xxi. 4.

herd in the stall; yet will we rejoice in the Lord, and we will joy in the God of our salvation."* Although misfortunes should besiege us round and round; though woes should cluster upon woes, treading on the heels of each other in black succession, yet when we remember God, and fly to him as our refuge, we shall stand collected and unshaken, as the everlasting mountains, amid the general storm.

With our eye thus fixt upon heaven, trusting in the mercies of our Redeemer, and animated by the Gospel promises, we shall urge our glorious course along the track of virtue, bravely withstanding the billows of adversity on either side, and triumphing in every dispensation of Providence. Though Death should stalk around us in all his grim terrors; though famine, pestilence and fell war should tear our best friends from our side; though the last trumpet should sound from pole to pole, and the whole world should tremble to its centre; though we should see the heavens opened, our judge coming forth with thousands and ten thousands, his eyes flaming fire, the planetary heavens and this our earth wrapt up in one general conflagration; though we should hear the groans of an expiring world, and behold nature tumbling into universal ruin; yet then, even then, we might look up with joy, and think ourselves secure. Our holy religion tells us, that this now glorified judge was once our humble Redeemer; that he has been our never-failing friend, and can shield us under the shadow of his wing. The same religion also assures us, that virtue is the peculiar care of that Being, at whose footstool all nature hangs; and that, far from dying or receiving injury amid the

* Habbak. iii. 17, 18.

flux of things, the fair plant, under his wise government, shall survive the last gasp of time and bloom on through eternal ages!

And now, my respected audience, I think it is evident that if we search all nature through, we shall find no sure refuge but in keeping a clear conscience, and remembering God. If we constantly exert ourselves to do our duty, and remember that there is an all-perfect Being at the head of affairs, the worst that can happen to us can never make us altogether miserable; and, without this, the best things could never make us in any degree happy.

If, therefore, it is one great design of all affliction, to bring us to such a remembrance, and make us examine into the state of our own souls, I think I may be permitted to beseech you, by your hopes of immortal glory and happiness, not to be blind and deaf to the repeated warnings given you by your kind parent God. Though the afflictions do not happen immediately to you, they happen for you; and though all seems well at present, which of you knows how soon the Lord may visit you in his fierce anger? Which of you, young or old, can say that your souls will not next, perhaps this very night, be required of you? And think, O think, if you have never been led to remember God, by the repeated warnings given you in this world, how unfit a time it will be to remember him, when you are just stepping into the next; when (as you have seen in the case of many younger and stronger than most of you here), you shall be struck senseless on a death-bed at once, and know not the father that begat you, nor are conscious of the tears of her that gave you suck?

If you can but think on these things, the vanity of this world, and the eternity of the next; if you can but think on the value of those souls, for which a God incarnate died, and sealed a covenant of grace with his blood, into which you have solemnly sworn yourselves; surely you will stop your ears against the allurements of the flesh, and the "Voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely." It may easily be gathered from what has been said, that this life has no continuance of unmixt pleasure for us; and that what alone can alleviate its evils, or make its goods give us any substantial joy, is a frequent reflection on the present state of things, and the drawing near to God, in holy remembrance of his adorable attributes, and our own absolute dependance on him.

Behold then once more this very God himself invites you to draw near to him, and commemorate him at his holy table.* Let him not, therefore, invite you in vain. Do not shamefully renounce your most exalted privilege, and wilfully cut yourselves off from the society of *God's universal church.*

You all know what is required to make you meet partakers of this holy communion. It is a steadfast faith in the gospel-promises and the mercies of God; a sincere repentance for past offences; an unfeigned purpose of future amendment, and an unbounded charity and benignity of heart towards all your fellow mortals, however seemingly different in sentiment and persuasion.

If you have these dispositions either begun now, or continued down to this day, from some earlier period of

* Preached on a Sacrament day.

your lives, you need not fear, in all humility, to approach this holy communion.

"Up, escape for thy life; look not behind thee; stay not in all the plain; fly to the mountain, lest thou be consumed;" was the alarm rung in the ears of Lot by his good angels? Even so, permit me, in the sincerity of my heart, to alarm and exhort you. Up! fly for your lives to the mountain of your God. Let not your souls find any rest in all the plain of this life, till you have fixed on the everlasting rock of your salvation, and secured your interest in God, through Christ. Let no excuses detain you, nor linger while the danger is at hand.

I hope you will excuse my warmth on this occasion. I wish I had no ground for it. But the shafts of death fly thick around us. You cannot but miss many whom you saw here a few Sabbaths ago; and some of them younger and stronger than most of you, particularly that dear youth, whose sudden and much lamented death has forced this train of reflection from me.

Such a dispensation ought to give particular warning to all; but to you more especially his dear companions and school-mates, I would apply myself; not doubting but the *moral* of his death will be acceptable to you, however unfavourably grave and serious subjects are generally received by persons of your years.

From the example before you, let me intreat you to be convinced that you hold your lives on a very precarious tenure, and that no period of your age is exempted from the common lot of mortality. But a few days ago, the deceased bore a part in all your studies and diversions, and enjoyed a share of health, strength and spirits, inferior to none here. You all knew and loved him,

and I beheld many of you bedewing his grave with becoming tears. Oh then! let it be your care so to behave yourselves, that, at whatever period you may be called from thence, you may fall equally beloved, and equally lamented.

Indeed if any external circumstances could have arrested the inexorable hand of death; if any thing that nature could give, or a liberal education bestow, could have saved such a rising hope of his country; late, very late, had he received the fatal blow! He bid fair to have been the longest liver among you, and my eyes would have been forever closed, before any one had been called to pay the tribute due to his memory. But the disease was of the most obstinate kind. All the power of medicine, and all the love we bore to him, could not gain one supernumerary gasp. He fell in his bloom of youth, and, as I long loved, so I must long remember him, with pious regard.

To the will of Heaven, however, mine shall ever be resigned. "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil also? The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord?" I sincerely believe that my dear pupil, your deceased school-mate, is now in a far better state than this. He has happily escaped from a world of troubles. He has but just gone a little before us, and perhaps never could have gone more beloved, more lamented, or more prepared for an inheritance in glory.

What stronger proofs of affection could any one receive than he did? Though at a distance from his immediate connections, strangers tended his sick-bed with paternal care. Strangers closed his eyes, while their own

trickled down with sorrow. Strangers followed him to the grave in mournful silence; and when his dust was committed to dust, strangers paid the last tributary drop?

Yet, after all, to have a son so loved and honoured, even by strangers, and to be surprised with the news of his death before they heard of his sickness, must be a severe blow to the distant parents—

But, why, alas! did this thought occur? Again my affections struggle with reason—again nature thou wilt be conqueror—I can add no more.—I have now done the last duty of love—let silent tears and grief unutterable speak the rest!

A SERMON

BY JACOB DUCHE, A. M.

FORMERLY RECTOR OF CHRIST-CHURCH AND ST. PETERS, IN PHILADELPHIA.

HOPE IN GOD, THE ONLY REFUGE IN DISTRESS.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.

Psalm xlii. 11.

It is a very mistaken notion, which some persons are fond of entertaining, that the life of a Christian is one continued scene of tranquillity, cheerfulness, and joy; that the path to Heaven is strewed with roses; that there is nothing thorny or uneven to annoy the pilgrim's feet, no storms or tempests to retard his progress, no difficulties or dangers to encounter on the way. Such sentiments as these, have a very pernicious influence on the practice of mankind. Prone to indolence in spiritual things, and averse to religious exercises of every kind, they are apt to catch at the pleasing delusion, and are willing to think, that the victory is obtained, before they have even armed themselves for the combat.

The truth is this: Ever since the unhappy fall of our first parents, good and evil are so mixed and interwoven in the present checkered and imperfect state

of things, that we can neither obtain the former, nor avoid the latter, without inexpressible labour, pain, and anxiety. The disorders introduced by sin into the moral world, have darkened and corrupted the natural; so that, in either system, it requires more than human strength to separate the evil from the good, and thereby to obtain temporal or spiritual felicity.

By the glorious scheme of redemption, indeed, the good Providence of God has overruled these disorders and irregularities in such a manner, as to render them beautifully subservient to the supreme happiness of his moral creatures. Storms and tempests, pain and labour, are become necessary for the health and preservation of the natural world: sorrows and anxieties, distresses and afflictions, inward struggles and pangs, are alike expedient for the purity and perfection of the moral.

God, therefore, who, at one intuitive glance, beholds all the relations and connexions of things, like a wise and provident Father, affectionately anxious for the welfare of his children, makes use of all these natural means, in various measures and degrees, according to the particular situation and circumstances of men, to restore to them that primitive felicity which had been lost by sin. Or, to express myself in plain Scriptural language—"It is through much tribulation we enter into glory: we must mourn, before we can be comforted:—If we would be Christ's disciples, we must deny ourselves, and take up our cross and follow him:—The world must be crucified unto us, and we unto the world:—If we would receive an eternal weight of glory, we must have our share of those light afflictions, which are but for a moment:—If we would taste the

peaceable fruits of righteousness, we must be exercised by those chastenings, which for the present are not joyous, but grievous."

But if such be the Christian's state, such the difficulties, dangers, and distresses that attend it, surely, he can have little joy or comfort in his progress.—There is something gloomy, melancholy, and forbidding in the prospect. So speaks the natural man, who is void of all spiritual discernment. Would such an one, however, deem any toil or danger too great to encounter, for the acquisition of some earthly object? Would he not compass sea and land, and risk his health, yea, his life, to obtain the fleeting enjoyment of honour, riches, or pleasure? And will he wonder, then, that a Christian should be willing to face the darkest scenes, when he knows that through these he shall pass to the enjoyment of everlasting honours; of riches, which will not make themselves wings, and flee away; and of pleasures, inconceivably exalted, unfading, and immortal?

When the heavens gather blackness, when thunders roll over his head, and lightnings flash around his frame, the natural man, at the very time that his heart shudders at the awful scene, will tell you, that these convulsions of nature are absolutely necessary for the good of the creation; that the sun is still shining above the tempestuous atmosphere, and that ere long, its rays will dissipate the clouds, and exhibit to your view the happy effects of all this uproar and confusion. With this pleasing hope, he speaks peace to his intruding fears; and, though he trembles, yet he enjoys the storm.

Thus it is with the faithful Christian. When overtaken in his spiritual progress, by the blackest tempests

that the devil, the world, and the flesh, his most formidable adversaries, can raise, he will nevertheless press forward with unremitting eagerness and ardour; and though " his soul may be cast down, and disquieted within him," though his whole nature may be shocked by the violence of the blast, yet will he still " hope in God," yet will he still speak comfort to his dejected spirit; as he is well assured, that all this could not happen without the Divine Permission; that the Sun of Righteousness still shines in the firmament of his glory; and that the Prince of the Power of the Air, with all the horrors that surround him, must soon vanish before his all-piercing beams, and sink confounded to his infernal abode.

The psalm from whence my text is taken, presents us with a lively picture of a true believer struggling under some violent assaults from the enemies of his peace. Whether the distress of David was occasioned by the persecution of Saul, or the straits to which he was reduced by the unnatural rebellion of his son Absalom; whether it proceeded from a deep sensibility of those remains of corruption, which lurk in the most regenerate breasts; or from an apprehension, that God had withdrawn " the light of his countenance" from his soul; in either of these cases, his affliction must have been acute indeed, and he might well break forth into this affecting strain of religious melancholy: " Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Why dost thou suffer these outward afflictions to bear down thy constancy, or these inward struggles to weaken thy faith?—Hope thou in God!"—Hast thou not heretofore experienced, in innu-

merable instances, the wonders of his love?—Hath not his arm supported thee in the greatest extremities?—Hath not his countenance cheered thee in thy darkest moments? Why, then, this strange dejection now? O where is all thy wonted heroism fled?—where that lively trust and confidence in thy God, that has heretofore steeled thy breast against the arrows of adversity? "Is his arm shortened that it cannot save? Is his mercy clean gone forever? And hath God forgotten to be gracious?"—No, my soul!—already do I feel his animating presence—Sure I am, that "I shall yet praise him," for delivering me out of my present distresses—Sure I am, that the sweet influences of his blessed spirit, will yet sooth my deep disquietude, and give health and cheerfulness to my dejected countenance—Yea, sure I am, that he is still "my God," my God by covenant, my guardian God, the God of my life, the God of my love.

Thus spake, thus triumphed, "the man after God's own heart!" Doubtless the conflict was severe and tedious; but faith was at length victorious. Noble encouragement this to every one, that hath listed under the banners of Jesus Christ, and commenced his Christian warfare!—Come then, ye candidates for Heaven! ye followers of the Lamb! ye strangers and pilgrims upon earth! that have already entered upon your journey, through this valley of tears, to the Heavenly Canaan! Come, let us take a view together of the difficulties and dangers which we are taught to expect upon the road! Let us trace the sources of that uneasiness and disquietude, to which the best of Christians are frequently exposed, and as we proceed, apply to them the noble pre-

scription pointed out by the text: " Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God."

The first, and, I believe, the principal sources of the sincere Christian's heaviness and disquietude, are those remains of sin and corruption, which stain the purest and most regenerate breasts. Under the first openings of grace, the first dawnings of divine light and love upon the soul, the change from death to life is frequently so great and transporting, that the young unpractised convert is lost in admiration.—From the depths of his own misery and corruption, he is raised to such stupendous prospects of redeeming love, that, like the disciples on Mount Tabor, he is unwilling to leave the divine effulgence that surrounds him, to descend from the height of gospel comfort, and to encounter the innumerable obstacles that await his progress in the world below.—But when once the fervours of this first love are abated: when once the young candidate is called forth to testify his affection for his Saviour, by acts of obedience, patience, resignation, fortitude, under temporal as well as spiritual trials and calamities—then it is, that the clouds being to gather—the day of distress approaches—" his sins take such fast hold of him, that he is not able to look up,"—his secret corruptions start forth unexpectedly from every corner of his heart, and throw his whole soul into confusion.—It is an attack for which he is unprepared; from a quarter which he little expected.—Scarce is he able to recollect his past experience; or, if he does, it is not with a view to strengthen his faith, but to increase his melan-

choly. In the full bitterness of his soul he is ready to exclaim:

" O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me! when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness!"—Once I thought that I had gained a sure refuge in my Redeemer's arms; I hoped that my peace was made, that I was a child of God, and had received the earnest of the Spirit in my heart. But alas! I now fear, that this was but a pleasing dream; that Satan transformed himself into an angel of light, to deceive my soul; that my conversion was a visionary thing, not a real change of my corrupted nature.—If this be not the case, whence is it that the sorrows of my heart are thus enlarged?—If I am indeed a child of God, " Why go I thus heavily, while the enemy oppresses me?"—And yet I hate these corruptions, which I feel so sensibly; and my greatest distress and uneasiness is, that I do feel them. The desire of my soul is towards God; and there is nothing in the whole world but what I would cheerfully resign to be at peace with him.—Yea, I can lay my hand upon my heart, and safely declare, that grievous as the transgressions are, into which my corruptions have hurried me, yet I feel something within me, that bids me hope, that the God whom I have offended, is the God whom I love.

Such are the sad disquietudes, which the latent remains of sin frequently awaken in the believer's breast! Many excellent Christians there are, who go thus mourning and disconsolate to their graves; whilst a few, perhaps, after repeated conflicts, and repeated victories obtain at length that sweet assurance, which enabled the

Apostle to declare, that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, should separate him from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus."

As for those, who are still mourning, and refuse to be comforted, who are continually expostulating with themselves in the plaintive language of my text—"Why art thou cast down, O my soul! and why art thou disquieted within me;" let us only ask them, whether the frame of their minds is in any respect similar to that of holy David's?—Doth thy soul, poor trembling Christian! "pant after thy God, as the hart panteth after the water-brooks? Art thou athirst for God, even the living God?" Are the desires of thine heart all centered in Christ Jesus? Dost thou wish to know him more fully, to serve him more faithfully, to love him more ardently, to receive the sanctifying influences of his Spirit here, in order to be qualified to dwell in everlasting communion with him hereafter? Is this the real state of thy mind? Take comfort then! "Hope thou in God; for thou shalt yet praise him, who is the health of thy countenance and thy God."

But are there no other sources of distress and disquietude to the sincere Christian, than the latent corruptions of his own heart? Are not some of his severest trials occasioned by the afflictive dispensations of Divine Providence? Doubtless they are. For good and virtuous men are so far from being exempted from misfortunes and afflictions, that they are taught to expect a double portion—"for whom the Lord loveth, he cor-

recteth; and chasteneth every son that he receiveth."—Under the immediate influence of these severe visitations, the "soul is indeed cast down and disquieted:" it can scarcely penetrate the gloom, with which its sorrows encompass it, or discover the potent arm that struck the blow, and robbed it of its peace. Or if it should see the will of God in the infliction—how hard to resign!—to kiss the rod, and bless the correcting hand!

When dire disease spreads its fatal venom through the human frame, and robs us of the bloom of youth, and the joys of health—when prosperity withdraws her smile, and poverty, with her attendant woes, succeeds—when death snatches a bosom friend or dear relative from our embraces—how difficult to adopt the language of the good old priest? "It is the Lord's will—let him do what seemeth him good."

The recollection of former prosperity, and of all the spiritual and temporal blessings which an indulgent Heaven had with profusion showered on our heads, serves only to give additional weight to the present load of grief, and deepen the melancholy that clouds and oppresses the soul. The eye of Sorrow is perpetually looking back, and lamenting the loss of objects, in which the mistaken mind had fondly centered all its felicity. It rarely ventures to send forth one eager look into the region of Hope. It deems it impossible to turn a present distress into a present blessing: and can never conceive, that darkness itself should be the very substance through which the light of Heaven must again be rendered visible to the benighted heart.

In the moment of Job's despondency, under the severe trials with which he was visited, he would have reasoned and spoke far otherwise than he did, had it suited the purposes of Heaven to unveil at that moment the secret design of his present affliction. Had he discerned the angel that was "riding in the whirlwind," —had he beheld "the hand that directed the storm," he would doubtless have changed the language of his exclamation:—O my soul, he would then have said, though thou art not "as in months past, as in the days when God preserved thee;" yet have I a secret hope, that thou wilt soon feel again his reviving presence, and praise him for greater blessings than thou hast heretofore received.

Indeed, my brethren, the most seemingly severe dispensations, if we could raise our thoughts, for a few moments, above the considerations of flesh and blood, would appear to be dispensations of mercy. Medicines, you know, are seldom sweet or palatable:—and yet, would you not thank your physician for administering them, when he knows they are necessary for the recovery of your health?—And canst thou then, O Christian, repine, or be dissatisfied with thy Saviour, for mingling the bitter draught of affliction, when he foresees, that thine everlasting salvation, perhaps, depends upon the remedy? Every thing that ties thee to the world, keeps thee at a distance from Christ. Can thy Saviour more effectually testify his affection for thee, than by breaking these cords, and thus lessening thine attachment to the world?—Cease, therefore, to repine at thy loss!— Be not cast down or disquieted!—Thy God hath not forsaken thee—he is only preparing thee for better times

—"Hope thou therefore in him, for thou shalt yet praise him, who is the health of thy countenance and thy God."

Lastly, The world in which he lives, and the men with whom he is obliged to converse, administer new causes of sorrow and disquietude to the sincere Christian. The secret treachery of pretended friends, or the open malice of avowed enemies, the general disrespect and contempt with which virtue is treated, and the honours and encouragement which are given to vice, all conspire to wound his breast, and even to render him less pleased than he wishes to be, with the society of his fellow creatures. For who that has the least spark of zeal for the honour of his God, can bear to hear his name blasphemed, and his religion ridiculed; to see his precepts violated with impunity, and his ordinances neglected and despised?—And yet to oppose these prevailing enormities, to testify an abhorrence of them by private reproofs, or public censures, is sometimes deemed rudeness and impertinence. Yea, such is the sad degeneracy of mankind, that if we would be truly religious, now-a-days, we must dare to be singular.

But be not thou discouraged, thou child of God! Though placed in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, thou hast reason to say, with David, "Wo is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Meshech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar!—O that I had the wings of a dove, for then would I flee away, and be at rest!"—though integrity, uprightness, and the fear of God should be even banished from the abodes of men—though the church of God should be laid level with the dust, and the disciples

of a crucified Jesus be ridiculed and reviled—yet fear thou not, neither be dismayed!—God sits at the helm of the universe—Christ Jesus will take care of "his own:"—and as for thyself, if, with Job thou art determined "to hold fast thy righteousness, and not to let it go, nor suffer thine heart to reproach thee, so long as thou livest"—if thou hopest in God, and trustest in the Lord thy Saviour—if the Righteousness of Christ is thy clothing, and faith in him thine impenetrable shield, "be thine outward circumstances in life what they will, believe me, thou art still under the defence of the Most High, and safe under the shadow of his wings." The stormy wind may blow, the billows of adversity may rise and rage—but whilst thou hast fast hold of the Rock of Ages, thou canst no more be moved by their blackest, rudest efforts, than are the strong foundations of some stately edifice, by the light breezes of a summer sky!

EXTRACT FROM A SERMON

ON THE

CHRISTIAN'S VICTORY OVER DEATH AND THE GRAVE.

PREACHED IN TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON, ON THE DECEASE OF ELIZABETH LADY TEMPLE:

BY JOHN SYLVESTER JOHN GARDINER, A. M.

RECTOR OF TRINITY CHURCH.

O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory! The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.—1 *Cor.* xv. 55, 56, 57.

Such, my brethren, is the victory which Death, the tyrant of mortality boasts over the earthly lords of the creation. Nor does his triumph cease with the extinction of his victim. The tolling bell, the sad procession, the tears and lamentations of the afflicted survivors, give poignancy to the sting of death, and crown with additional trophies the victory of the grave. The heart weeps blood at the final separation from those, who were dear to us, and the wounds inflicted by the grim tyrant are sometimes incurable. Here we see the deserted orphan, deprived of her sole support, bereaved of *her*, who had watched, with parental solicitude, over her cradled in-

fancy, instructed her inexperienced youth, and trained her up in the path of piety and virtue. What consolation now remains to her, save innocence and heaven? At one moment, the wife and mother is torn from the embraces of her distracted husband, and weeping children. At another, the father of a numerous family, whose prosperity depended on his life, is suddenly summoned to his fate, and obliged to leave behind him the objects of his fondest affection to the casual charity of strangers. Here the afflicted father attends his only son to the grave. There the sorrowing mother follows with faultering footstep the bier of the daughter whom she had idolized; of her, perhaps, who had been the pride and joy of her life, the delight of every circle, the ornament of every assembly, dear to her eyes and tender to her heart. Dissolved in wo, the melancholy mourner sickens at the sun, and wastes her days of solitude and confinement, in tender recollections and unavailing regrets.

Thus dreadful is the sting of death, thus formidable the victory of the grave.

But is the triumph of death final? Is the victory of the grave eternal? No, my brethren. Jesus Christ has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. By this great event, death is swallowed up in victory, and the expiring Christian may now exclaim with exultation, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Without this blessed revelation, what would be the situation of man? What *was* it, before the Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in his wings? The wisest of the heathens were animated with hopes of a future state,

but those hopes were clouded by doubts and uncertainty. They gazed with anxious eye on the boundless ocean of futurity that lay before them. They strove to discover the shore on the other side. But they strove in vain. Clouds and darkness skirted the horizon, and veiled the immortal coast from their view.

The anxiety felt on this subject, before the revelation of the Gospel, is well expressed in the book of Job: "If a man die," says he, "shall he live again? There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground, yet, through the scent of water, it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth, and is cut off. Man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea,—as the flood decayeth, and drieth up,—so man lieth down, and riseth not. Till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep."

But this gloomy prospect the sun of righteousness dispels. The star from Jacob shines, and the shadows of death vanish. "I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. Whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die."

Wide as the dominion of death is, it is but temporary. The dominion of life is more wide, and it is eternal. The dominion of death extends but to what is transitory and mortal; the dominion of life to the past, the present, and the future. Nothing ultimately perishes, but, after apparent dissolution, revives, and flourishes with increased vigour. The seed which you plant, de-

cays and dies, and yet from this death a new life arises. It springs up, flourishes, and bears fruit an hundred fold. The sun shines with mild radiance in the morning, blazes out in full majesty at noon, remits his brilliance and fervour towards evening, and sinks into his watry grave. But does he revive no more? Does he leave the world involved in darkness and horror forever? No, "to-morrow he repairs the golden flood, and warms the nations with redoubled ray." The plants and flowers, that wither at the touch of winter, revive in the spring, and once more expand their variegated beauties in that genial season.

Let then the tyrant Death exert his destructive power. That power is limited and short-lived. It can only turn to dust, that which was originally dust. It cannot affect the immortal spirit, it cannot extinguish the etherial spark, that animates the clay of man. "The dust only shall return to the earth, as it was, but the spirit shall return to God, who gave it." O death, where is then thy sting? O grave, where is then thy victory? Thy triumph, O death, is futile! Thy victory, O grave, fallacious! Ye have indeed destroyed the earthly tenement, but the immortal inhabitant has mounted to his native heaven. He has ascended to "the bosom of his Father and his God," disappointed thy malice, and there will enjoy perpetual rest and felicity.

However irresistible, my brethren, the power of death may be to mortal man, the power of life is still superior. It disarms death of its sting, and despoils the grave of its victory. It turns dishonour into glory, defeat into triumph, clothes corruption with incorruption, and mortality with immortality. With God every thing is

possible. Though the dust of our buried bodies should be blown to distant regions, incorporate with other substances, or sink to the bottom of the sea, yet can the eye of Omniscience discover, and the hand of Omnipotence separate and recollect it, reinstate the dismembered and dishonoured body in its former situation, and render it glorified and imperishable. He *can*, my brethren, and he declares that he *will*. To the blessed Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, has he given this power; at whose second coming, in glorious majesty to judge the world, the earth and sea shall give up their dead, and the corruptible bodies of those, that died in the Christian Faith, shall be changed, and made like to his own most glorious body, according to the mighty power, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself. His powerful voice shall break the slumber of the grave, and reanimate the dead. " O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Yes, my brethren, though the power of death is formidable, what is it when compared with the power of life? What though the body repose whole ages in the cold and silent tomb, what are those ages, when contrasted with eternity? What is the dark night of the grave, when compared with the brilliant morning of the resurrection, when, awakened from the long sleep of death, we shall rise refreshed, and rejoice to run our new and immortal career. Death destroys. Life restores. Death exults in darkness and horror and misery. Life in light and joy and happiness.

In the blessed regions of immortal felicity you will enjoy pleasures, which the grossness of mortal sense cannot enable you to conceive. You will be reunited with those you loved, never to separate again; and, as your happiness will be perfect, so will it be endless. What then, my brethren, have we to fear? Can the Christian, with these blessed assurances, tremble at the approach of death? No. Let the infidel and the scoffer shudder at the thoughts of that annihilation, into the belief of which they have foolishly reasoned themselves. Let them leave all that is dear in this world, with the gloomy prospect of eternal separation. Christians, you have better hopes. You can say to that great spoiler, O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thy sting, O death, can but destroy the body. Thy victory, O grave, is but temporary. In spite of thy power, we shall once more enjoy the society of our friends and relations, free from every care and apprehension. "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Such, my brethren, is the contrast between death and life, the grave and the resurrection. May it prove a source of consolation to all of you, and more particularly to those, who lament the death of a dear and respected relation. Let them reflect that "blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; for they rest from their labours." Let them "not sorrow as those who have no hope," but rather make that improvement of the distressing event, which religion and common sense dictate, and so regulate their lives, that they may "die the death of the righteous."

EXTRACT FROM A SERMON,

BY ASHBEL GREEN D. D.

SENIOR PASTOR OF THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION IN PHILADELPHIA.

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF THE REV. JAMES SPROAT D. D.

In the various allotments which take place in regard to dying comforts, infinite wisdom may have some purposes to answer which at present we cannot discern. We know, however, that in heaven they all are happy, and that it is but the difference of a few moments, more or less, that distinguishes any. We also know, that if some have trials which others escape, these trials are opportunities and calls for the exercise of graces which have a speedy reward. We are assured that "these light afflictions which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—Is this an unquestionable truth? Is it a declaration of "the God who cannot lie," that all the sufferings of his saints shall augment their eternal reward? Here, then, is the full explanation of every difficulty—Moments of pain, compensated by "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" are a treasure put to the shortest and richest interest. Yes, and could our departed pastor speak to us from the mansions of eternal peace, he would say, "I bless God supremely, for every pain he caused me to endure. His grace sanctified it, and it is now a rich jewel in the eternal crown which he hath placed on my head. I bless him that he called me to so sore a conflict at the

close of life, for he gave me the more abundant and divine support. I died. But he made me a dying conqueror, and my songs of triumph will be sweeter to all eternity."

Let us now take a wider and more distinct survey of the bright prospect to which our attention has just been pointed, by considering,

III. That the death of the saints is precious in the sight of the Lord with reference to all its effects or consequences.

To this the inspired penman of the text, had, no doubt, a principal view in the words before us. Precious, indeed, will the God of faithfulness render the fruits of death to all his people. "As it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which he hath prepared for them that love him." It will take an eternity, my brethren, fully to learn what are the riches of the inheritance of the saints. A part of it, however, is made known in the gospel of Christ. Here it is revealed, that one of the precious consequences of their death, is an immediate cessation of all sorrow. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." Oh how happy a transition have the departed spirits of our pious friends experienced, who have gone to heaven during this calamity.* Their spirits here were oppressed with grief, and weighed down with sorrow at beholding the scenes of gloomy distress that were passing around them. In the midst of all they fall asleep in the Lord; they awake in his blissful presence; their souls are all serenity, peace, and joy;

* The yellow fever, in 1793.

their grief appears only like a melancholy dream, which serves to heighten the substantial happiness, of which they feel conscious that they are eternally possessed.

To be entirely free from the remainder of sin, is another of the happy consequences of death to the saints. This is, indeed, implied in their being free from sorrow. Never can a real christian cease to mourn till he ceases to offend. The most heart-felt grief that he ever experiences, arises from his offences against that Saviour to whom he feels himself so deeply indebted, and from that lamentable imperfection which is mingled with his very best performances. But death is his happy deliverer from this greatest of all enemies and evils. When it destroys the body it destroys all sin and imperfection. The soul rises pure and spotless to the God and the mansions of immaculate holiness. Here it is admitted to the immediate vision of God and of the Lamb. The heaven-entered spirit experiences an access to, and a communion with the Father of spirits, which language cannot describe or thought conceive.—Think, oh Christian! of thy happiest hour. Think of an hour when thy soul has made its nearest and most delightful approaches to thy God; when the light of his countenance was most lifted upon thee, when the veil of sense was most removed, when unbelief was most extinguished, when spiritual things appeared to be the most substantial realities, when God in all his attributes appeared an immensity of inconceivable excellence, when his government and dispensations appeared the wisest and best administration, when his will appeared to be all the choice and desire thou wouldst have, when his glory appeared the best object and most worthy of being supreme, when the plan of redemp-

tion in all its parts beamed upon thy mind as a system of divine wisdom, grace, and beauty—ineffable, when thy blessed Saviour in all his work and character was seen unspeakably amiable and infinitely adorable, when thy heart expanded with glowing love to him and benevolence to men whom he came to save,—when thy soul, in still and sweet and solemn vision of these things, told thee it was "good to be here," and that moments of such enjoyment were not to be exchanged for ages of the highest sensitive pleasure;—this is heaven upon earth. Imagine all these exercises to be purified and sublimed; the capacities of the soul enlarged so as to take in a greater measure of them, and strengthened so as to endure a perpetual continuance of them; and this, it may be, is as just a view of the heaven to come as our minds can take at present. To see God and the Saviour "face to face," to be "filled with his fullness," and "bear his likeness," to go "no more out," and not to fear any termination of the beatific joys, or separation from them, seem to constitute the scripture representation of a glorified state.

As we have every reason to believe that all the powers of the soul will, in a better world, not only be preserved but invigorated, it is pleasing to think how the memory will be employed in the mansions above. It will, no doubt, often carry back the glorified saint through all the past scenes of this militant state. He will review, and surely with wonder, his engagements with the world, and the needless and foolish anxieties which agitated his mind in regard to the things of time. He will review, with pity, his unreasonable fears and groundless apprehensions. He will recollect with astonishment

and, I had almost said, with grief, the prevalence of his unbelief, his want of trust and confidence in God, and the deficiency of his zeal and animation in the service of his Master. He will see that it was all of divine and sovereign grace that he was ever arrested in his career of sin, that his heart was renewed and sanctified, and that he was constantly supported through the whole of the spiritual life. He will see the kind designs of a faithful God in all those providences which, while he was here, appeared hard and dark and inexplicable. He will see that they all were necessary, and that, in very deed, all things have worked together for his good. And while he surveys these things, he will recollect that they are now the things that are past—forever past—but that the sweet fruits of them remain, and shall eternally endure. Such contemplations will animate the glorified spirit to raise high the notes of praise to the fulness of redeeming love, and to the abundance of that unmerited grace, which make so weak and worthless a creature, "a conqueror, and more than a conqueror" of all the powerful and insiduous enemies that were leagued against him.

"They that have turned many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever." The creation of God appears to be a system of subordination. There are different orders of angels, and there will be different orders of saints. But this, where the will of the Creator is the spring and fountain of happiness, will give delight to all and not diminish it in any. Those who have laboured, and loved, and suffered much in the cause of God will be greatly distinguished. They will appear as stars of the first magnitude in the heaven of unfading glory. Among these our departed friend, it is reasonable

to conclude, will possess a conspicuous place. For more than fifty years he had been a laborious and faithful servant of Jesus Christ; and those who knew him best, will be the readiest to testify the piety and purity of his life, and the conscientious discharge of his ministerial duties.

EXTRACT FROM A DISCOURSE,

ON THE

HAPPINESS OF GOOD MEN IN A FUTURE STATE,

BY SAMUEL STANHOPE SMITH, D. D.

PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY.

That they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. *Rev.* xiv. 13.

The first subject of consideration concerning the future happinesss of good men, suggested in the text, is Rest.

II. The second is Enjoyment—"their works do follow them."

This figurative language evidently points to that high and *positive* state of felicity which the saints shall enjoy in heaven, which is the consequence and reward of their works. It conveys to us also, in the mode of expression, two other truths of the highest importance: —the first, that the habits of a holy life are necessary to qualify men for the possession of heaven; because, without them, they neither could desire it as their abode, nor could they enjoy the pure and spiritual pleasures that constitute to the pious, the happiness of the place: —The second, that their rewards there shall be proportioned to the advances they have made in the divine

life; and to the labours they have endured, the dangers they have encountered, and the services they have performed for the benefit, and above all, for the salvation of mankind, which is the service of Jesus Christ, their master and their Lord. On this subject the apostle Paul hath taught us, "he that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall also reap bountifully."* There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, and one star differeth from another in glory; so also shall it be in the resurrection of the dead."† The most pious, faithful, and successful servants of Jesus Christ shall shine with the highest lustre, and enjoy the most consummate happiness in his eternal kingdom. What an animating motive was this to the fortitude of the primitive martyrs! What an illustrious, what a divine encouragement is it to the duty of every believer in Christ! If he does not reap his reward in this world, he shall receive one proportionably more rich and glorious in the world to come; where "the wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."‡ Let us my brethren, remember, however, the great and fundamental doctrine, laid by the apostles as the foundation of our hopes, that "it is not by *works of righteousness* which we have done, but by *grace* we are saved." Those works cannot be presented at the throne of divine justice, as forming any absolute claim to the rewards of heaven; but they become, by the gracious promise of God, the title of a believer to a recompence that infinitely transcends any claim that can be grounded on

* 2 Cor. ix. 6. † 1 Cor. xv. 41—42. ‡ Dan. xii. 3.

the merit of human obedience. They follow him, not as a meritorious measure; but as measuring, so to speak, the infinite proportions of divine grace and of heavenly glory.

The gradations of rank, splendour and felicity in the kingdom of Heaven, are but faintly and obscurely marked to us in Holy Scripture. It is more easy to impart to minds like ours some general apprehensions of the glory and perfection of the state of Heaven, than nicely to trace its degrees. A scale of this kind requires a knowledge of the subject more accurate and just than our limited faculties are able to receive even from the holy spirit of inspiration. Such a *scale* was not necessary to the end for which this revelation was made to the divine St. John, which was to encourage the martyrs in their mortal conflicts. Their cruel sufferings and their unshaken firmness, would indeed, procure for them a *higher rank* in the order of the heavenly state, than others should attain, who had not been called to give the same heroic proofs of their fidelity to their Lord. But it is the expected *glory and felicity* of that state, that sustains the courage of a Christian, and enables him to triumph over the most formidable pains of death.

This felicity and glory is the subject chiefly pointed at in the text, and that to which without entering into any representation that must at best be fanciful, concerning the economy, and the gradations of rank that may take place in the kingdom of God, I shall limit my view in the remaining part of this discourse.—But how shall we describe that which *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard*, and of which it hath not *entered into the heart of man* to conceive! It would require the colours of hea-

ven and a divine pencil to represent that celestial "city which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of the Lord doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it, and there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they who are written in the Lamb's book of life."*

The improvements, and the sublime perfection of human nature shall be correspondent to the glory of its habitation. But both, perhaps, are equally out of the reach of our conceptions at present. We must actually have attained, before we can fully comprehend, those immortal powers with which the *body* shall be raised from the grave, and reunited to the soul, purified and exalted by a nearer approach to God. It is raised, saith the apostle in incorruption—in glory—in power.—It is raised a *spiritual body!*†—Mark that bold and extraordinary figure. It is allied in its essence to the immortal spirit—composed of the most pure and active principles of matter that resemble the purity and activity of the soul—incorruptible in its organization like the diamond—splendid in its appearance like the sun—rapid and powerful in its movements like the lightning, that bears in its course an image of the omnipotence of the Creator.

The *soul*, purged from the dregs of sin, shall bear a higher resemblance of the perfection of God in whose image it was first created. Its intellect shall be boundlessly enlarged—its affections shall be directed with im-

* Rev. xxi. 23, 24—27. † 1 Corinthians xv. 42, 43, 44.

mortal and unceasing ardor to the eternal source of love —and we have reason to believe that it shall enjoy the power of unlimited excursion into the works, and, if I may speak so, into the essence of the Deity.

On a subject of which it is so far beyond the present powers of the human mind adequately to conceive, it becomes us to speak with modesty and caution. In judging of it, reason affords no lights to guide us—the fires of the imagination will only mislead us—we must take our ideas solely from the Scriptures of Truth. And when we collect together all that those sublime oracles of wisdom have said upon this subject, and take from the whole, those general views which they give of the state and felicity of Heaven, we may range them under the heads of its *glory*—its *immutability*—and its *eternity*.

Its glory—"It doth not, indeed, yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."*—There the redeemed shall dwell in the presence of God, who alone can fill the unlimited extent of their desires —there they live in the delightful exercise of an eternal love, and in the full possession of all that can render them supremely blessed—for, "in his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures forever more."†

There they cease not celebrating in songs of ecstasy, the infinite perfections of God, and the boundless riches of redeeming love. "Hallelujah! Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God."‡ Worthy is the Lamb that was "slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and

* 1 John iii. 2. † Psalms xvi. 11. ‡ Revelations xix. 1.

glory, and blessing!"* There, according to the emblematical language of the Revelations, they are seated on thrones, and receive from his hands celestial diadems—for, saith the spirit, "they shall *reign* with him forever and ever."†

If human nature, notwithstanding all its present imperfections, is destined to such improvement and felicity, much more is it reasonable to believe that the eternal habitations of the pious, and the temple of the immediate presence of God, are infinitely superior in splendour and glory to all that we now behold in the sublimest, or the most beautiful works of nature. When this veil of sense shall be withdrawn, what an unutterable scene of wonders shall be disclosed! Imagination cannot picture them, language cannot describe them; we have no powers, at present, capable of admitting or sustaining the view. Could we suppose a mole that grovels in the earth, enveloped in absolute darkness, and circumscribed to a few inches, to be endued with the powers of vision and reason, and suddenly admitted to contemplate, with the eye of Gallileo, or the mind of Newton, the splendors and boundless extent of the universe, its ravishments, its transports, its ecstasies, would afford but a faint image of the raptures of the soul opening her immortal view on the glories of that celestial world.

But the glory of the heavenly state consists not only in the augmented powers of human nature, and the external magnificence that adorns it, but in the holy and devout, and, may I not add, the benevolent and social pleasures that reign there.

* Revelations v. 12. † Revelations xxii. 5.

There "the pure in heart see God,"*—there they "know even as also they are known"†—there they love without sin him whom it was their supreme delight to contemplate and to love on earth.—And if, with the divine philosopher of Greece, I may venture to speak so, there they mingle themselves with God.—But this is a subject which I dare not touch. I fear to profane it by the imperfect colouring, or the misguided fervours of sense.—Sometimes the humble and devout believer, in the communion of his soul with God, or in the celebration of the precious mysteries of his grace, in his temples here below, has enjoyed such discoveries of his infinite goodness and mercy as have been almost too powerful for the feeble frame of flesh and blood—Ah! what then will be the manifestations of Heaven! My beloved brethren, an Almighty power, a celestial regeneration will be necessary to enable you to sustain the unutterable bliss!

I have ventured to mention also the social and benevolent pleasures of that state. And it will not, perhaps, be the smallest part of the felicity of pious souls to enter into the society, to participate the joys, and to receive the congratulations of those perfect spirits who have never fallen from their rectitude, and of the saints redeemed from among men, who have gone before them to take possession of their promised rest.—"There is joy in Heaven, saith Christ, over one sinner that repenteth‡"—how much greater will be their joy, when he has escaped the dangers of the world, when he has no more cause of repentance, when he has kept the faith, when all his conflicts and temptations are finished, and

* Matthew v. 8. † 1 Corinthians xiii. 12. ‡ Luke xv. 7.

he has arrived at the end of his course where nothing shall ever be able again to shake the security of his state, or to impair the plenitude of his happiness? What high enjoyment will it be to meet there his fellow travellers through the dangerous pilgrimage of life, escaped from its pollutions and its snares. To meet there with "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets," with all the holy apostles and martyrs of Christ! To meet there the friends who were most dear to him on earth, whose souls were mingled with his! To meet there his fellow Christians out of every denomination, on whom, perhaps, he had been accustomed to look with distrust and jealousy! Nay more, to meet there devout men like Cornelius from every nation under Heaven; and to see the grace of God infinitely more extended than those narrow limits which probably his prejudices had prescribed to it! What immortal consolations must fill the breasts of those who "are come unto mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly of the church of the first born, who are written in Heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the Spirits of just men made perfect."*

The immutability of the happiness of Heaven is another character of it, that deserves our consideration. The power of God will place the redeemed beyond the influence of temptation and sin, and the perfection of the heavenly state will forever exempt them from all those causes of frailty and change that exist upon earth. It knows no change except that of continual progression. The principal value of all our sources of enjoy-

* Hebrews xii. 22. 23.

ment in this world is destroyed by their instability. Every object here is mutable, and disappoints those who expect permanent felicity from it, and *pierces through with many sorrows* those who attempt to lean upon it. Even the comforts that flow from religion in the present life are variable and uncertain, because the sanctification of the believer is still partial and imperfect. But, in Heaven, being perfectly holy, he shall be completely and immutably happy.

Eternity is the idea that crowns and enriches the whole. "There shall be no more death," saith the *amen*, the faithful and true *witness*. The felicity of the saints, like the being of God, shall be interminable.—Glorious and consolatory truth! I would willingly assist your minds to frame some measures of an immortal existence, but how shall we measure a subject that so far surpasses our feeble conceptions? Number the stars that fill the sky—reckon the sands upon the sea shore—count the drops in the immeasurable ocean—compute the atoms that compose the globe—multiply them by millions of years, and when this amazing succession of duration shall have been finished, and repeated as many times as are equal to its own units, eternity will be but beginning—Beginning! It cannot be said to be begun. It is wrong to apply any term which measures progression, to that which has no period.

In this astonishing and boundless idea the mind is overwhelmed! What a glory does it shed over the *inheritance of the saints in light!* How strongly is it calculated to awaken the desires of a believer after the *rest that remaineth for the people of God!* I may add, how well is it fitted to console those who mourn over their friends who sleep in Jesus! If, at any time, the mind is

ready to sink under the weight of its sufferings in the present life, and to repine at the will of God, will it not become patient, and even thankful again, when it looks forward to that immortal blessedness to which every calamity that tends to crush this frail tenement of clay, is only hastening our passage? "For our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."*

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord! yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them! What a consolatory, what a sublime and glorious object is here presented to the faith and hope of good men, and confirmed by the faithful asseverations of the spirit of truth! All the sufferings, induced by sin in the present life, there come to an everlasting period—all the joys that human nature exalted and improved with immortal powers can sustain, shall be possessed by the redeemed, and shall continually increase in an endless progression. There you behold them in the midst of their heavenly country from which they shall be no more exiled—there they contemplate without a veil, in the clear, unclouded vision of heaven, the adorable perfections of God—they behold him enthroned in glory ineffable, whence he dispenses happiness to countless myriads of blessed spirits —Rivers of pleasure issue from the foot of the eternal throne—they bathe themselves in those pure and celestial streams—they are absorbed in ecstacies of a divine and immortal love.

* 1 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

My brethren! what an animating motive to *perfect holiness in the fear of God*, is proposed to your faith in the blessed promise of life and immortality! What a reward for all the labours, and self-denials of virtue! What a consolation under all the afflictions of life!—The happiness of heaven is essentially connected with purity of heart, with sanctity of manners, and with usefulness of living. And your progress in these divine qualities shall be the measure of your eternal felicity. The path of perfect virtue, indeed, is laborious, and often passes in its course over steep and difficult ascents. Our passions frequently render extremely painful the sacrifices which duty requires. We are obliged to combat with the world, its interests, its pleasures, its examples, its solicitations, and, still more, to maintain a constant conflict with ourselves. But, contemplate the sublime recompence which religion confers on these labours and these sacrifices, and they are arduous no longer. What are the enticements by which vice would ensnare the heart, and withdraw it from virtue, compared with that *fullness of joy* that is in the *presence of* God, and those rivers of *pleasure* that flow at his *right hand forevermore!* What are the labours or dangers of duty compared with its triumphant reward! *Endure hardness*, therefore, *as good soldiers of Christ Jesus*, remembering that these short conflicts shall, ere long, gain for you crowns of victory, and encircle you with immortal glory.

Finally, this hope affords a good man the best consolation under affliction. All the necessary evils of life will soon be ended, and will open to him a peaceful entrance *into the joy of his Lord.* If disease and pain are hastening his *return to the dust from which he was*

taken, why should he repine, since they are at the same time bringing him to those *living fountains* of immortal health, where *God shall wipe away all tears from his eyes?* If the dearest ties of friendship, or of love are broken asunder, and his heart is torn by cruel breavements, religion enables him to find a sweet repose in God his best friend, and conducts his hopes to a speedy and delightful reunion, in the regions of the blessed, with those pure and virtuous souls who were here most dear to his heart. In like manner, if poverty overwhelm him, or his fairest possessions have been blasted by the stroke of divine providence, are they not infinitely more than compensated in that *heavenly inheritance* to which, by divine grace, he is born?—And, when death comes to dissolve the temporary and decaying tabernacle in which he had sojourned in this barren wilderness, can he be dismayed, or yield to impious fears, when he sees beyond its flood the *land of* promised *rest*, in which there is prepared for him *a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!*

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord—yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them!

CONSOLATORY REFLECTIONS ON DEATH,

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND,

BY CHARLES H. WHARTON, D. D.

RECTOR OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH, BURLINGTON, NEW JERSEY.

When a Christian retires occasionally from the bustle and business of life, to indulge in solemn meditation either on his own death, or that of his departed friends, he will soon find the language of reason whispering to his heart, some sentiments like the following:

"The soul has no other centre than eternity. Every thing propels her towards this noble end:—the tedium of life and frequent disgusts which she experiences, together with her desires, her hopes and designs, are all sources of that restless impatience, which needs convince her, that repose is to be found only in God.

Now, what is the voice of reason in the midst of all this irksomeness and distress? Here below, it says, you are only exiled beings, whose eyes should be always turned towards your heavenly country. The evils and passions of which you complain, are so many graces dispensed by Heaven, to disgust you with the world, and wean you from mortality. This universe is nothing more than a theatre, exhibiting the momentary appearance and disappearance of successive generations; and the curtain will then only drop, when you shall be admitted into the mansions of glory and rest. Whatever you may say, or do, that bears no reference to this

grand catastrophe, will prove as frail and transient, as the spider's web. Your wealth, your honours, your plans and pleasures forming no part of yourselves, can never content your hearts, nor banish from them wants and desires which will never be gratified.

Such is the language of reason, powerfully calculated to draw the heart from the follies of life; but alas! like the last syllable of the echo, it seldom leaves any traces upon the mind. By indulging our desires, we make ourselves wretched, because we desire *that* only which keeps death at a distance. We do not consider, that by closing our eyes on time, it opens to them the gates of eternity, and that, in proportion to the horrors of the tomb, will be the splendours and majesty of the realms of rest. The never-ceasing influence of material perceptions, is the primary cause of that deplorable lethargy in which we languish out our lives. Man, all carnal as he *is*, and too frequently wishes to remain, cannot behold, without horror, the bereavement of his wealth, his friends and his honours. He cannot acquiesce in the idea, that his soul exists for God only, and that, possessing him, it becomes rich and powerful beyond calculation. Death, of course, to him must be the most hideous spectre, and the worst of evils. If his dread of it arose from the alarms of conscience, it might, in that case, be rational and salutary; but it is nothing more than his regret at quitting a world which he idolizes.

How contrary are such sentiments to those which reason inspires! These place us immediately before the face of God; they afford us a glimpse of his eternal brightness, which penetrates and beatifies the souls of his servants. Christian philosophers have ever groaned

under the burthen of their flesh, because they were the disciples of unsophisticated reason; while mere pretenders to wisdom, limit their whole essence to the operations of matter, in itself inert and corruptible. They boast of traversing the regions of space, of sending their excursive fancy to explore the reign of nature through oceans and firmaments, while, at the same time, some contemptible gratification, connected with matter, rivets them to the earth.

Truly wonderful and sublime is the soul, which rather longs after, than shudders at death. She can cast a look of pity on the thrones of the earth, and in holy raptures, untinctured either with enthusiasm or fanaticism, can look up to God, as capable exclusively to fix and satisfy her desires.—She can pass by the melting sounds of the most exquisite harmony, the most splendid decorations of outward objects, which the senses are accustomed to idolize; and, concentrating within herself her perceptions and knowledge, can fix her contemplation and delight on imperishable excellence and beauty. To these are directed her most ardent longings, and a holy impatience at their absence springs up within her.

How must reason sigh, that sentiments, which ought to prevail among *all* men, should be regarded by the greater number as the visions of fancy? And reason, accordingly, acts unshackled among those only, who can appreciate death rather as exalting the soul, than degrading the body. It is to enlist our faculties in the service of falsehood and vanity, when we cherish a dread of the moment, which is to unite us to God. Can a return to a father, a benefactor and friend; can

the occupation of a kingdom be a subject of affliction? And yet, we lament our departed friends as the victims of some misfortune; and a long life for ourselves and others, as the summit of human felicity, is the first wish of our hearts. But what, in fact, is this life? Are the smiles on its surface accompanied with no lurking disquietudes beneath them; or can they counterbalance all the evils of mortality? There is not a day, perhaps not an hour, in which our imagination is not busy in disturbing our repose; in which we do not experience some actual pain, or corroding anxiety? If our bosoms be not lacerated with sorrow, yet they are frequently distracted by our wants and privations. When unmolested with disappointments, we are oppressed by business; the burthens of opulence supersede the desperation of poverty; the gloom of solitude becomes as irksome as the importunities of the world; and though no slaves to our passions, we often sink under the influence of desolating scruples and fears. In a word, the constant uneasiness arising from our relatives, our friends, and ourselves compel us, as it were, to look on death with a friendly eye, as the termination of our sufferings, and to sigh after a life more luminous and tranquil.

As long as we continue to live, two opposite principles are striving for the mastery within us:—Reason remonstrates on the one hand, but passions speak still louder on the other, till all the faculties of the mind become enveloped in a chaos, which death alone can dissipate, by restoring us again to ourselves and to God. Then it is that the wall of separation is thrown down, which intercepted the view of the Deity; then we return to our native country, the abode of justice and of

peace. Then all our desires unite in the centre of unchangeable bliss, and we become partakers of a nature immutable, immense, and almost divine. Wrapt in these lofty ideas of his destiny, man feels himself lifted above this mortal scene—All the powers of his soul become shaken and sublimated—He conceives himself lightened from the load of the body, the earth vanishes away, and the sun disappears: eternal light seems to surround him; and the carnal being, lately creeping in the dust, becomes an intelligence pure and sublime. Already he beholds God, face to face, whom the sacred oracles had taught him to acknowledge, whom faith had taught him to adore.

But it is not often that mortals regard, or welcome death under this cheering aspect. Many have been known to wish for it merely as a termination of their sufferings: and hence it is, that on the death of those around us, our ears are often shocked with such expressions as these: "It is a happy deliverance, and we should comfort ourselves that his sufferings are at an end." Every idea is suppressed which might lead the bystanders to consider the deceased as an immortal being. What! have we then stifled the voice of our souls, which is continually reminding us of our immortality? Have we discarded the discoveries of revelation, assuring us that death is often the consummation of misery? O let us be convinced, that then only we are really alive, when relieved from the incumbrance of the body.

Is it, then, a matter of surprise, that men, that Christians should cease to deplore, nay, should even welcome an event, which alone can put a period to their misery,

which separates them from a world that wears them out and corrupts them, and which confers upon them supreme felicity? Ought we not, on the contrary, rather to wonder at seeing them entirely occupied with this fleeting life, enslaved by the smiles, or the goods of fortune, and unmindful of the embarrassments and remorse which follow them, regard them as the leading objects of human existence, and contrary to daily experience, and, by an inconceivable miscalculation, conceive the treasures of a coffer to be those of the heart. But suffer time to do its work, and then, if any doubt still remains, it will assuredly convince us, that our wisest projects, in appearance, were real follies; and that he only is a wise man, who attaches himself to that, which can never decay. To welcome death, is to render it propitious; for before we welcome a friend, we prepare to receive him. The irreligious alone would wish never to die, or they who are stupid enough to believe in annihilation.—Against all such sound reason recoils, at least, that reason, which dictates these lines.

I am well aware, that a tomb is to human nature an object of dismay, and appears to be the term of its melancholy existence; but reason, or in other words, the intimate conviction of our hearts, speaks a different language. It tells us, that the thinking principle is imperishable in its nature; that our desires are too vast for the limits of human life; and that, in forming a moral creature, God had not completed his work without bestowing on it existence commensurate with its ideas of immortality.

It is in death that reason looks for the moment, when it will no longer contend with the irregularity of

the passions, or be obscured by their mists. It is, from not attending to the lessons of death, that we wish to prolong our own exile, or that of our friends. We confound these lessons with our earthly affections. But what a flood of light will break in upon us, to what an eminence shall we be elevated, when disengaged from the portion of earth which weighs us down, we shall feel all the vivifying influences of the divinity rushing upon our souls! This earth is an inconvenient habitation for the noblest faculties of our nature. Reason sees little here, but transactions which degrade her;—hears little but language that contradicts her; and, in the most popular writings, reads much that insults her: but, introduced into Heaven, through the gates of death, she becomes fixed in her own immutable centre, and all her faculties expand in proportion to their contraction here below.—Wherefore, let the rational mourners comfort themselves, and one another, in these words."

On occasions of this nature, Religion must chasten, without suppressing the feelings of humanity. If you remember how immoderately Cicero, the best and wisest among the heathens, mourned for his daughter Tullia, you will readily perceive the superior advantages of Christianity under these afflicting dispensations. That great man could derive no support from the assurances of Revelation, which are readily recurred to by the Christian. I recollect a sentiment in the book of wisdom, very applicable to your present distressing situation;* where Solomon, speaking of the early death of the righteous, says, "*He being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled*

* Occasioned by the death of a beloved daughter, aged 19.

a long time. For his soul pleased the Lord, therefore hasted he to take him away." Wisdom of Solomon iv. 13, 14. To carry with her into the presence of her Creator that white robe of innocency, which she put on at her baptism, and to leave with her relatives the sweet recollection of every endearing quality, and piety unfeigned, are circumstances which, in a great measure, will tend to counterbalance the regrets for her premature passage through this painful world. She leaves one parent, it is true, who in a few years must follow her, but goes to another, with whom she will live forever.

From reflections, such as these, nature, I trust, will soon cease to repine at your loss, and to offer any disturbance to the cheering conviction, that you have, lodged in the bosom of her Redeemer, an additional supplicant* for his mercies upon her family.

"In the journey of life," says the pious bishop Horne, "as in other journeys, it is a pleasing reflection, that we have friends thinking of us at home, who will receive us with joy, when our journey is at an end."

* Her mother did three years before.

A LETTER

FROM THE REV. JOHN LANGHORNE, D. D.

RECTOR OF BLAGDON, SOMERSETSHIRE,

TO MRS. ——.

ON THE DEATH OF HER DAUGHTER.

If I have not been so early as the rest of your friends, in condoling with you upon your late affecting loss, it was because I was unwilling to interrupt you in the first stages of your grief. I had moreover sorrows of my own to sooth—I had tears of my own to dry up, which, had they mingled with yours, would have increased our common distress. This, however, was not the principal reason why I have delayed to visit you, or to write to you. I would have waited upon you while my heart and my eyes were yet full of your misfortune, had I not been sensible that every argument I could have used on the behalf of content or comfort, would then have been ineffectual; and also that, by being repeated, they would have had the less weight now. Under the first attacks of extreme sorrow nature is to be left to herself. At such a time the consolations of friendship, by their infectious tenderness relax the tone of the heart, and increase the sensibility of the sufferer; yet there is a season in affliction when the consolations of friendship may be useful: As the same medicine, which

taken in the height of a fever, would infallibly increase it, will, if administered at a proper interval, prevent its return. It is the business of friendship and philosophy rather to prevent sorrow from growing into habit, than to defend the heart from its first influences. The one is a natural, the other a moral evil, and it is in the latter only that the precepts of the moralist can be of use.—Thus much, madam, to apologize for my past conduct, and to give greater force to what I have now to say.

That you may be willing to give up the company of *Sorrow*, consider the nature and qualities of your companion. Her constant business is to draw gloomy and dejecting images of life; to anticipate the hour of misery, and to prolong it when it is arrived. Peace of mind and contentment fly from her haunts, and the amiable graces of cheerfulness die beneath her influence. Sorrow is an enemy to virtue, while it destroys that cheerful habit of mind that cherishes and supports it. It is an enemy to piety; for, with what language shall we address that Being, whose providence our complaints either accuse or deny? It is an enemy to health, which depends greatly on the freedom and vigour of the animal spirits; and of happiness it is the reverse. Such, madam, is the genuine disposition, and such are the qualities of *Sorrow:* And will you admit such an enemy to your bosom? Her sacrifices are the aching heart and the sleepless eye, the deep-searching groan, and the silent tear.—Will you become a votary to such a fiend? A fiend that would rob your Creator of his honour, the world of your virtue, and yourself of your happiness. Yet farther, it will rob your friends of your affection—here think me self-interested if you please;

but what I advance is true. Sorrow will deprive your friends of your affection. The heart that has been long a prey to misery gradually loses its sensibility—gloomy and unsocial habits succeed, and the love of human kind is at last absorbed in the stagnation of melancholy. A sad situation this! but too often the effect of sorrow unseasonably continued and indulged.

But shall we, madam, inquire into the cause of this sorrow, which, possibly, you may say with Shakspeare, is *too great to be patched with proverbs?* Is it on the account of her whom you lament, or on your own? "No," you answer; "it is on behalf of my dear child. Shall I not bewail the cruelty of her destiny, cut off from the fairest hopes in the very bloom and vigour of life? Alas! is this the end of a virtuous and elegant education? My poor Harriet! what does it now avail that you neglected the trifling amusements and vain pursuits of your sex, to acquire a taste for the finer enjoyments of the mind? Surely long happiness was due to you who had taken such pains to deserve it! Dear creature! had she lived to adorn the married state, her amiable sincerity, her natural politeness, and, above all, the virtuous sensibility of her heart would have completed her own happiness by insuring that of her husband."—All this, madam, you might say, and the mother's affection exaggerate no circumstance. But this must have been said upon a supposition that life, while it continues, cannot but be happy; or at least that virtue and excellence must infallibly produce happiness. These, however, are conclusions which none of the best observers of human life have admitted. Happiness may be destroyed by many circumstances which it is not in

the power of virtue to prevent. It is far from being impossible, madam, that the lady, whose death you so passionately lament, may by that death be exempted from many evils. How many has the pale tyrant unmercifully spared! What a lasting affliction must it have been to you, had the noble mind of your Harriet been doomed to suffer imprisonment in a feeble and unhealthy body! Had the fair rose been early blasted, and the root cruelly suffered to live, and pine away gradually through a course of delightless years! Moreover, as beauty is no charm against the natural evils of life, so neither is virtue always a defence against its moral evils. —Your amiable Harriet, with all her accomplishments, might have been unfortunately united to splendid insensibility, or wealthy avarice! Her virtues might have become the object of profligate ridicule, or misinterpreting ill-nature; and her person might have administered chagrin to negligence, or fuel to jealousy. In such circumstances I suppose the sensibility of her heart would have been far from defending it from misery; and the consciousness of her own integrity would have afforded her little relief; when the only person whose esteem it should principally have procured her, looked upon her with coldness or aversion. You know, madam, that these are no uncommon evils; and though Harriet was every way worthy of a better fate, she might nevertheless have had her lot among the multitudes that suffer and complain. Neither would the cruelty or the negligence of a husband have been the only evils that would have endangered her peace: It would have been equally exposed to ruin by the follies and vices of a child; or, what is the case of few parents, had she met

with no ingratitude and beheld no wretchedness in her offspring, her gentle heart might have been wounded, like the heart which these arguments are directed to set at ease, by the death of a beloved child. Consider, madam, too, that by her earlier death she has escaped those sorrows she would have suffered for you.—You only have to mourn for the loss of her; but she might have mourned for you, for herself, and for her offspring.

Indeed, the loss of *this intellectual being* might be accounted a misfortune almost at any rate, were *this sensible, warm motion to become a kneaded clod*;* but we, who are taught such noble conceptions of the Author of nature, can never suppose that He will suffer even a temporary cessation of consciousness.—I cannot enter into those gloomy apprehensions that when the immortal spirit has forsaken the body, its faculties shall for a time be chained down in a state of unconscious stupidity. Such an appointment would, in my opinion, both be inconsistent with the nature and properties of the soul, and contrary to the attributes of its benevolent Creator. To what various modes of being, inconceivable to us, may not Omnipotence assign our departed spirits? What degrees of happiness may not He have in store, adapted tointellectual existence? Concluding then, that your virtuous Harriet is now in a state of superior bliss, how superfluous would it be to mourn on her account! Would you, were it in your power, recall her happy spirit to these regions of chance and vanity? Would you wish the liberal mind to leave its intellectual feast, and reanimate a clod of earth? Would you then confine its dilated powers in the prison of a

* Shakspeare.

mortal body, and subject it to all the pains of its miserable partner? "No; surely, no." I hear you say, "I will mourn no longer for my child."

Yet, possibly, you may mourn for yourself; there is always something selfish in those sorrows that seem to be most social. It is hard, you will say, that you should lose the comfort of such a child in the decline of life. Her filial tenderness would have cheered the languor of age, and would have strewed its barren way with the flowers of youth. Moreover, what joy must it have been to you to have seen your maternal cares successful in her growing virtues, and those virtues crowned with the happiness they deserved! This, madam, you have lived to see. Believe it, your Harriet is now in possession of greater happiness than this world has to give. By her death you are no doubt deprived of many comforts, but may not these be more than made up to you, by the pleasure of reflecting on that sublime felicity she now enjoys. Indulge that reflection, and how poor, how contemptible will every thing else appear upon comparison!

Were not these arguments sufficient to set your heart at ease, I might refer you to the universal law of nature, from which there is no appeal. Have not *death* and *ruin* established their empire over all her works? Is not the history of every nation replete with their triumphs? Does not every place through which you pass present you with the ruins of existence? Cease the mother's sighs a moment, and attend the general condition of *nature*. Cast your eye upon yon continent—there she sits bewailing the destruction of her sons;—there have perished, within these few years, more than

two hundred thousand of the human species by the devouring jaws of war. Shall we afflict ourselves for a private loss when the world is dying around us! Let us remember that we were born within the precincts of death, and sacrifice to him without many tears.

I am persuaded, madam, that *none of these things were hid from you;* but it is possible, that in the depth of your affliction you might not attend to them. Should I add more, I might seem to distrust your prudence; but had I said less, I should not have proportioned my arguments to the greatness of your grief. Happy should I be, if I could have the least weight with you!—If you would now convince the world that, as you are possessed of every other virtue, you are not wanting in fortitude.

LETTER

FROM THE REV. MR. JOB ORTON

TO THE

REV. DR. STONEHOUSE,*

ON THE DEATH OF HIS DAUGHTER.

I AM grieved to hear your amiable daughter is dead. I sincerely and very tenderly sympathise with you under this affliction, by which you are visited with sorrow upon

* Few readers need to be informed, that Dr. Stonehouse was a clergyman of the church of England. He had been many years a physician at *Northampton*, and was a professed deist. Dr. Doddridge was the happy instrument of his conversion. He afterwards entered into orders, had the livings of *Great* and *Little Cheverell*, in Wilts; but resided part of the year at *Bristol-Wells*. He formed an acquaintance with Mr. Orton at *Northampton*, and ever afterwards maintained a correspondence with him. See a full account of this eminent man in Mr. Stedman's collection of his letters, particularly No. 36.

The following Letter the Doctor himself inserted in a newspaper, under the title of *a letter from a minister to one in affliction*. Writing to Mr. Stedman, soon after, he says, (*Let.* vii.) "Mr. "Orton's Letter to me on the death of my daughter, Mrs. Palk, "which appeared in the *Bristol Journal*, was much liked; and in a "following paper there was an encomium upon it, but by whom "I know not. He does not wish to have it known that he was "the writer of it, because, says he, it was a hasty production; "though printed by his own permission, at my request." Mr. Stedman has subjoined a copy of it, by way of note.

sorrow, as it so soon follows the great loss of your son. Though I know not the heart of a parent, yet I bless God my temper is naturally impressible and compassionate: and though in some cases it hath been a source of grief, more than, in like circumstances, many others have felt; yet I believe my suffering friends have not wished it less so, nor upon the whole, have I myself. I have lost many valuable young friends, whose education I had watched over with a parental eye and care; whose characters was upright, amiable, and honourable, and whom therefore I loved as my children. My heart hath felt an anguish upon their removal, perhaps equal to what most parents feel in such cases, and I have found a dreadful chasm made in my hopes and joys.

Such scenes are still in my remembrance; and therefore I feel deeply and affectionately for you, under this stroke, to which the distance of time and place makes no inconsiderable addition. I wish I could any way lighten your burden and dry your weeping eyes. But what can I write or say, but what is already familiar, and I hope soothing and comforting, to your wounded spirit? However, let me desire you to turn your thoughts, dear sir, to God your Father and her's who is now numbered with the dead; and to Jesus Christ her Saviour and your's, and remember his bleeding compassion, dying love, perfect example of submission: his precious promises, his entrance into heaven, and intercession for us there. Turn your thoughts to that fulness of grace and spiritual influence which he has to communicate to all his friends and servants in the time of need. Think of the relation you have to the world on which she is en-

tered, and of the serious hours you have had together, with a view of parting when God appointed.

When you parted with her to so great a distance, I am persuaded you thought it highly probable you should see her no more in the flesh, and your increasing years and infirmities have so much increased that probability since, as almost to forbid the hope of it. So that her removal to another world, hath, in this light, many alleviating circumstances; especially as you have so often, so seriously, and so solemnly, since that first parting, left yourself and her and all your interests, mortal and immortal, with her and your Father and God, absolutely and without reserve.

If nature will not be duly influenced by such considerations, turn your thoughts to, and keep them upon, the hope you have of meeting again, and enjoying one another in a far different manner from what this poor world will admit, though she had been settled near you, or even in the place where you live; and which [meeting] when it happens, will make all the duration of our present enjoyment of one another a matter of no consequence at all. Think again, my worthy fellow-labourer in the gospel, what you have said to others in like circumstances, from the pulpit and in the parlour, and what you would say to me, were I now in your situation. Think what you have felt and tasted, and will, I trust, always do, in every day of trouble and distress. In short, turn your thoughts to every thing that will lead and even constrain you to believe the will of God to be wise in all its determinations; infinitely wise: to be approved, therefore, as well as submitted to.

I know you will not dare to say—"Lord, is it fit that such a weight of repeated complicated affliction

should fall to my share? that disappointments in my dearest earthly hopes should come one upon another; and that at a time too when I am more than ever intent upon serving thee, promoting thy glory, and saving my fellow immortals?" I know you will vail to infinite wisdom; allow to God acts of sovereignty, and subscribe to the goodness as well as the justice of his conduct. This he demands from us, and this he deserves. And is there any thing in which we appear so much to advantage, and are really so ornamental to religion, and useful to all about us, as in manifesting an humble fiducial resignation to God, and a cheerful acquiescence in his will, when he is pleased to take away the delight of our eyes and joy of our hearts? Do we ever pray so well, recollect ourselves to so good purpose, aspire so much after the favour and love of God? Are we ever so hearty in religion, so careful to cherish and strengthen our hopes of glory? Are we ever so filled with wisdom and goodness; so able, so desirous, to admonish and comfort others, as amidst such painful scenes? Are our passions ever so restrained; the pleasures and possessions of this world so overlooked, and our hearts brought *not to seek great things for ourselves* and ours (see *Jer.* xlv. 5.) as by such painful events? How had it been with you and me and other servants of God, had it not been for afflictions?—had we not been sometimes sick and sometimes sad?—had we not attended chambers of confinement, and seen our lovely flowers fading and dying? But then it is affliction *sanctified*, attended and followed with humble fervent prayer, and prayer attended and followed with *a supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ* that is thus effectual.

You will now show the religion of your divine Master to some considerable advantage; more perhaps than ever: and instead of sinking under the present burden, let it be your main care and labour to do this, and apply vigorously in your Master's work. An officer in our army in *Flanders*, seeing a brother officer, whom he much loved, slain in a moment near him, said, "Ah! poor captain! he is dead; but come, we must march on."

I wish to hear of your going to *Cheverel*, as you intended. There, air and exercise will, I hope, recruit your languid spirits, and a zealous engagement in your Master's work will divert your mind from brooding over its sorrows, and fill it with thoughts, wishes, and hopes, which will be your best relief, and draw down some peculiar support and consolation from above. For when are we so likely to enjoy them as when we vigorously serve our divine Master, amidst disappointment and tribulation? A pious, zealous minister once wrote to me to this effect: "I have been under sore affliction by the death of my dear child: but God enabled me to be the more active and diligent in his work, and I have reason to believe that, by my labours since that event, he hath given me at least seven *spiritual* children, who will be my joy and crown of rejoicing in that day." May this be your happy case! Then it will indeed be good for you to have been thus afflicted. I am daily mindful of you in my poor way, and commend you and yours to the great Intercessor, whom the Father heareth always.

A LETTER

BY DUGAL BUCHANNAN,

ON THE

DEATH OF A FAVOURITE DAUGHTER.

THE following letter was written by *Dugal Buchannan*, an obscure peasant, who lived in the Highlands of Scotland, to a respectable citizen of Edinburgh, upon hearing of the death of one of his daughters, who was deservedly dear to himself, and all his family.

The elevated and pious sentiments contained in this letter, will be an apology for the plainness of its style. It is happily calculated to console parents, who may be visited by a similar affliction.*

TO MR. ——.

DEAR SIR,

I RECEIVED a letter from Mr. ——, acquainting me with the death of your daughter, Miss Jenny. How it affected me, I cannot so well describe as Mr. —— has done. What an alleviating circumstance is it in

* The author of this letter, during a visit he once paid to the city of Edinburgh, went upon buisness into the house of a gentleman, in whose parlour he saw a bust of Shakspeare, in alto relievo, with the following lines incribed under it:

" The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,
" The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
" Yea, all which it inherits shall dissolve,
" And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
" Leave not a rack behind!"

The gentleman, perceiving Mr. Buchannan's eyes attracted by these lines, asked him, if he had ever read any thing equal to

your trial, that you have no reason to mourn as those who have no hope. How many live to see their children cut off in the prime of life, by diseases which are the just effects of vice and intemperance! How many darts and thorns must pierce their hearts! What additional gall and wormwood is mixed in their cup, which the relations and parents of pious children are strangers to! Imagine then you hear your dear departed child adopting the language of her Redeemer, and saying, "If ye loved me, ye would *rejoice*, because I am gone to the Father." But how backward are our hearts to this duty of rejoicing—Our passions often get the better of our understanding as well as our faith; and our memories, which are treacherous enough on other occasions, are ever faithful here; and by cruelly mustering up all the amiable qualities of our departed friends in a long succession, open our wounds to bleed afresh. Nay, our imagination is set at work, and stuffs up their empty garments in their former shape, when we miss them at bed or board. It is truly surprising, that when our understandings and judgments are fully convinced of the equity of God's ways, and that his whole paths are not only truth but mercy, to such as fear him, that it has so little influence in silencing the inward murmurs of our souls. Instead therefore of poring over our wounds, and refusing to be comforted, we should endeavour to

them in sublimity—"Yes, I have, (said Mr. B.) the following passage in the book of Revelations is much more sublime—"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them." (Rev. xx. 11.) "You are right," said the gentleman, "I never saw the sublimity of that passage before."

acquire the blessed art of letting our faith trace out our friends in the regions of bliss and immortality; where, to use Milton's words, "They walk with God—high "in salvation, and the climes of bliss." Although revelation hath left us so much in the dark with regard to the employments of departed saints; yet surely it is pardonable to cast some conjectures over this wall that divides us from our friends. It is impossible to confine our active souls under the canopy of sun, moon, and stars; and since so little is revealed to us of the heavenly state, *analogy* must be our next best guide, in exploring those mysteries which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man been able to conceive. I remember some time ago to have seen a book of Dr. Watts called, '*Death and Heaven*,' in which he has happily indulged his fancy in assigning various employments to the blessed. He thinks there may be some solemn stated periods of worship in heaven, beyond what is their common service, either to commemorate some of the past transactions of the Godhead, or to celebrate some new discovery of God. And truly, considering the infinite nature of God, and his glorious acts of creation and redemption, and the finite nature of the highest order of created beings, there must be new discoveries made to the blessed through all eternity. Now, as they can only receive such discoveries in succession, it is highly probable that some of the past acts of Jehovah will be commemorated at stated periods, to endless ages. Perhaps some such manifestation, or a discovery has been lately made, unknown 'till now in heaven itself; and perhaps there has been a new song composed on this occasion, either by Michael, Gabriel, Moses, or David,

or some other masterly hand, to celebrate this new discovery; and perhaps the concert was incomplete, till a messenger was despatched from heaven for your dear child, to assist in singing the chorus, as her sweet melodious voice was so well tuned before to the songs of Zion.—Our Lord once entered into Jerusalem with a grand retinue, and he had a demand for an ass to ride upon, that he might fulfil an ancient prophesy concerning himself.—A messenger was despatched for the ass; and if the owner refused him, he had positive orders to tell him, that 'the Lord had *need* of him.' If your heart complains that your child was too soon loosed from you, saying, 'Why was my dear child so suddenly snatched from me, in the bloom of youth; when I expected she should be the comfort of my old age, and sooth my pains and distress.' Why, the same answer stands on record for you, 'the Lord had *need* of her.' He had need of more virgins in his train, and your dear child was pitched upon: Therefore rejoice in her honour and happiness. Our Lord hath gone to heaven to prepare mansions for his people, and he sends his Spirit to prepare his people for their mansions; that they may be fit to act agreeably to the great end of their calling, and to fill their thrones to the honour of that God, who hath called them to glory and honour. He then crowns them with endless happiness. Some have a longer time of probation than others. The great dresser of God's vineyard knows best when to transplant his fruit-bearing trees. We ought, therefore, always to acquiesce in his wisdom.—If I were to reason from analogy, I might ask your spouse when she was with child of her departed daughter, if she desired to keep her in that close union

with herself any longer than her full time was come; that is, when the child was perfectly formed for this world, and fit to exercise its senses upon the various objects that the world affords: Nay, did she not wish for the happy minute of separation, though she knew the pangs and throes of child bearing. And why should you or Mrs. —, who rejoiced at her first birth, mourn at her being admitted into the number of the spirits of the just made perfect; when it is certain that many who rejoiced with you at her birth, hailed her arrival on the coasts of bliss. Among those who rejoiced with you at her first birth, and saluted her on the heavenly, we may safely mention Mr. and Mrs. —, and others of your pious relations and neighbours, who have got crowns on their heads, and palms in their hands, since her first birth. But I see that this subject would lead me beyond the bounds of a letter. May the Lord bless your remaining children, and preserve them to be the comfort of your age; and form them to be vessels of honour, fit for the Master's use! I have only to add, that from my very soul I sympathize with you, and the rest of your dear family, in your loss, which is her gain and glory,

Your most obliged humble servant,
D. B.

PATHETIC LETTER

ON THE DEATH OF AN ONLY CHILD.

THERE is a nestling worm in every flower along the path of life; and, while we admire the spreading leaves and unfolding blossom, the traitor often consumes the root, and all the beauty falls. You are not surprised that my letter opens with a serious reflection on the fleeting state of earthly pleasures. This my frequent theme will continue, I believe, till my eyes are shut upon this world, and I repose upon a bed of dust.—The son of sorrow can teach you to tremble over every blessing you enjoy. Pay *now*, to thy living friend, the tear which was reserved for his grave. I have undergone one of the severest trials human nature can experience. I have seen a dear and only child, the little companion of all my hours of leisure, the delight of my eyes, the pride of my heart, struggling in agonies of pain, while I poured over him my tears and prayers to heaven in vain. I have seen him dying—dead—coffined.—I have kissed him in his shroud —I have taken the last farewell—I have heard the bell call him to the silent vault, and am now no more a father! —I am stabbed to the heart, cut to the brain.

——Hæret lateri lethalis arundo.

VIRG.

With what tender care was the boy nursed!—How often has he been the pleasing burden of my arms!—What hours of anxiety for his welfare have I felt!—What endearing amusements for him invented! Amia-

ble was his person, sensible his mind.—All who saw, loved him—all who knew him admired a genius which outran his years. The sun no sooner rose than it was eclipsed. No sooner was the flower opened, than it was cut down. My mind eagerly revolves every moment of past joy.—All the parental affections rush like a torrent and overwhelm me.—Wherever I go I seem to see and hear him, turn round—and lose him.

What does this world present, but a long walk of misery and desolation?—In tears man is born—in agonies he dies.—What fills up the interval?—Momentary joys and lasting pains.—Within, a war of passions; without, tumult and disorder reign. Fraud, oppression, riot, rapine, bloodshed, murder, fill up the tragic tale of every day; so that a wise man must often wish to have his curtain dropt, and the scene of vanity and vexation closed.—To me, a church yard is a pleasing walk.—My feet often draw towards the graves, and my eyes turn towards the vault, where all the contentions of this world cease, and where the weary are at rest. "I praise," with Solomon, "the dead who are already dead, more than the living who are yet alive."

I will call reason and religion to my aid.—Prayers and tears cannot restore my child—and to God who made us we must submit.—Perhaps, he was snatched in mercy from some impending wo.—In life he might have been miserable, in death he must be happy.—I will not think him dead—I will not consider him confined in the vault, or mouldering in the dust—but risen—clad with true glory and immortality; gone to the regions of eternal day, where he will never know the loss of parents, or of a child;—gone above the reach of sorrow, vice, or

pain. That little hand, which was so busy to please here, now holds a cherub's harp.—That voice, which was music to my ears; warbles sweet symphonies to our Universal Father, Lord, and King.—Those feet, which ran to welcome me from toil, and my arms received, while I held him up, and for the blessing used to thank my God, now traverse the starry pavement of the heavens.—The society of weak, impure, unhappy mortals is exchanged for that of powerful, pure, blessed spirits;—and his fair brow is encircled with a never-fading crown.

Shall I then grieve, that he, who is become an angel, grew not to be a man? Shall I drag him from the skies? Wish him in the vale of sorrow?—I would not, my dear boy, interrupt thy bliss.—It is not for thee, but for myself I weep.—I speak as if he was present.—And who can tell, but that he sees and hears me?—"Are there not ministering spirits?"—And our great Milton says,

> "Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,
> Unseen, both when we sleep and when we wake."

Perhaps, even now, he hovers over me with rosy wings—dictates to my heart, and guides the hand that writes.

The consideration of the sorrows of this life, and the glories of the next, is our best support.—Dark are the ways of Providence while we are wrapped up in mortality;—but, convinced there is a God, we must hope and believe, that all is right.

May the remainder of my days be spent in a faithful discharge of the duty I owe to the Supreme Disposer of all events! I am but as a pilgrim here, have trod many rough paths, and drunk many bitter cups.—As

my days shorten, may the Sun of Righteousness brighten over me, till I arrive at the new Jerusalem, where tears are wiped away from every eye, and sorrow is no more! —May I descend into the grave, from which I have lately had so many "hair-breadth,' scapes," in peace! May I meet my angel boy at the gate of death; and may his hand conduct me to the palace of eternity! These are the fervent prayers of

Your afflicted friend,

T. J.

MONODY,

TO THE MEMORY OF AN ONLY DAUGHTER, WHO DIED, AGED 11.

BY HER FATHER.

A COMMON theme, a flatt'ring muse may fire,
To raise our passions, when she sings for hire!
She may our wonders or our praises steal,
By feigning transports which she does not feel;
But, when the song from inbred love proceeds,
And paints the torments of a heart that bleeds,
The mourning Muse exerts superior skill,
And dips in tears the wo-depicting quill.
Our bosoms then with real tortures glow;
For, genuine sorrow doth from nature flow.
Ah! what is life, that anxious wish of all?
A drop of honey in a draught of gall;
An half existence, or a waking dream;
A bitter fountain with a muddy stream;
A tale, a shadow, or an empty sound,
That's lost with sorrow, and with anguish found.
A fading landscape painted upon clay;
The source of wo, the idol of a day;
The sweet deluder of a restless mind;
Which, if 'twas lost, how few would wish to find!
Untimely thus the infant budding rose
Is cropt by some rude hand before it blows;

Away the little soul of fragrance flies,
And beauty in its bloom unheeded dies.
Though 'tis in vain to wish for her return,
Yet, all the ties of nature bid me mourn.
Can I be dumb when bleeding Nature cries,
That I have lost the darling of my eyes?
Oh! can you check the unrelenting sea,
Or make the jarring elements agree?
Can you forbid the tide to ebb or flow?
Can you restrain the fall of hail or snow?
Can you command the thunder not to roar,
Or drive the beating billows from the shore?
Have you the art to lull a storm to sleep?
Such pow'rs alone, can teach me not to weep:
And since such pow'rs ev'n angels are deny'd,
Forbear, a fellow-mortal's grief to chide.
But, give me license to lament her fall,
As David mourn'd for Jonathan and Saul;
Or, if it may with innocence be done,
As he lamented Absalom his son;
When in the anguish of his soul he cry'd,
Would God, my son! I in thy stead had dy'd!
And lend your aid (if any such there be)
Who love a child, or mourn for one like me.
Your sympathetic sighs in concert join,
And blend your tears, your groans, your pray'rs with mine.
But, if there's none commiserates my case,
And in no breast compassion finds a place,
Let not your censure add to my concern,
Nor smile, whilst I, immerst in sorrows, mourn.

If you are void of trouble, free from pain,
Increase not mine, nor wonder I complain.
I know the stroke is from the hand divine,
To whom I must submit, and not repine.
Though I deplore my loss and wish it less,
Yet I will kiss the rod and acquiesce.
A Saviour's blood shall supersede my fears,
And, love paternal justify my tears.
When death at first besieg'd this little fort,
The feeble out-works were the tyrant's sport;
A fever made the first attack in form,
And then, convulsions took it soon by storm;
Succours from art were weak, like those within,
The guards were sickly, and the walls were thin;
In bad repair the gates and citadel,
No wonder then, that with such ease it fell.
Death's icy hands the lovely fabric spoil'd;
He got a victim; but, I lost my child!
Five mournful days, with trembling hand and heart,
I play'd the whole artillery of art.
Five nights I pass'd in sorrow like the day,
And almost mourn'd my own sad self away;
But, when the whole that art could do, was try'd,
Her lease of life was cancel'd, and she dy'd.
She dy'd! The conscious whisp'ring winds reply,
And I, unhappy father! saw her die.
I saw her die? Can I the deed forgive?
How can I bear to say I did and live!
Though long her reason suffer'd an eclipse,
No sinful words proceeded from her lips;

And though oppress'd with agonizing pain,
She uttered nothing indiscreet or vain;
Hence my fond hope, her soul being free from sin,
Resign'd, and spotless, was at peace within.
Whilst nature yet maintain'd the doubtful strife,
And death sat brooding on the verge of life;
Ev'n then, when all the hopes of life were fled,
I and the angels waiting round her bed,
They to conduct her to the realms of day,
And I to weep, to sigh, to mourn, to pray;
I kiss'd her lips; I wip'd her dying face,
And took the father's and the nurse's place.
Her dying groans were daggers to my heart;
We knew we must, but Oh! were loth to part.
I mourn'd, I wept, I gave aloose to grief,
And had recourse to all things for relief;
But, all in vain! The last effort I make!
I gave—But Oh! she had not strength to take.
Her flutt'ring pulse with intermission play'd,
And then her heart its palpitation stay'd;
And thus through all the forms of death she past,
Till, with a groan, my dear one breath'd her last.
But who can paint the horror or the pow'r,
Of Nature's conflict, in so dark an hour?
The wound was such, that time can never heal,
No balm can cure it, and no art conceal.
May that sad day be banish'd from the year,
Or cloth'd in sable, if it must appear!
May the bright sun withdraw his beams at noon,
And solid darkness veil the stars and moon!
May all the sands be stagnant in the glass,
And, as the hour returns refuse to pass!

All clocks be dumb, and time forget to fly,
And may all natures be as sad as I!
Let mourning in its blackest dress appear,
And she be never named without a tear!
Her name shall live, and yield a sweet perfume,
And, though in dust, her memory shall bloom.
Ah! where are now those dear obedient hands
So pleas'd to execute my whole commands?
Where are those feet so early taught to run,
As light'ning swift, unwearied as the sun?
Or, where those arms, which with such passion strove,
To clasp my neck, and stifle me with love?
Where those dear lips where mine were fond to dwell?
And where that breath which ravish'd with its smell?
Where is that tongue whose prattle pleased mine ears,
Where fled the hope of my declining years?
Where is that face so pleasant when she smil'd?
Or, where's the woman acting in the child?
Where those dear eyes, which with such sweetness shone?
Or rather, where are all my comforts gone?
Where is that breast where virtue once did grow?
As roses sweet, and white as falling snow?
They're buried all in the voracious grave,
Where kings are levell'd with the meanest slave.
The wise and great when there they make their bed,
Are equal'd by the wretch who begg'd his bread.
'Tis there the wicked can no more oppress,
And there the weary find a calm recess.
Alas! the wretched hope in this alone;
In this confiding, I will cease to moan.

Till death, *this* thought shall mitigate my wo,
And dry those tears which now profusely flow.
That when, by heaven's command, I quit the stage,
Bow'd down by time, and quite fatigued by age:
My flesh shall rest in quiet by her side;
Like a fond bridegroom sleeping by his bride;
Till the last day shall both to life restore,
When death shall die, and time shall be no more.
Oh! then, blest shade! my late delight and pride,
In whom I hop'd to have a nurse and guide;
When tastless days shall bow my hoary head,
And pain or sickness fix me to my bed;
If I may guiltless call upon thy name,
And ask a boon without incurring blame:
Though thou art happy now among the blest,
Indulge a tender father's last request—
When some kind angel from this world below
Shall bring the news, for sure the angels know,
And shall to thee and other spirits tell,
That mine has orders to forsake its shell,
And be transplanted to the realms of light,
Where hope and fear are swallow'd up in sight:
Do thou with heavenly rapture meet my ghos
On th' utmost limits of that happy coast.
Let me receive increase of joy from you;
Till then, my little saint! Adieu! Adieu!

ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD

AT DAYBREAK.

BY THE LATE REV. R. CECIL.

"Let me go, for the day breaketh."

"Cease here longer to detain me,
Fondest mother! drowned in wo:
Now thy kind caresses pain me;
Morn advances—let me go.

"See you orient streak appearing!
Harbinger of endless day;
Hark! a voice the darkness cheering,
Calls my new-born soul away.

"Lately lanched, a trembling stranger,
On this world's wild boisterous flood;
Pierced with sorrows, tossed with danger,
Gladly I return to God!

"Now my cries shall cease to grieve thee,
Now my trembling heart find rest;
Kinder arms than thine receive me,
Softer pillow than thy breast.

"Weep not o'er these eyes that languish,
Upward turn'd toward their home;
Raptured they'll forget all anguish,
While they wait to see thee come.

" There, my mother! pleasures centre—
Weeping, parting, care, or wo,
Ne'er our Father's house shall enter—
Morn advances—Let me go.

" As through this clam, this holy dawning,
Silent glides my parting breath,
To an everlasting morning—
Gently close my eyes in death.

" Blessings endless, richest blessings,
Pour their streams upon thy heart!
(Though no language yet possessing)
Breathes my spirit ere we part.

" Yet to leave thee sorrowing rends me,
Though again his voice I hear;
Rise! May every grace attend thee,
Rise! and seek to meet me there!"

LINES

WRITTEN UPON THE TOMBSTONE OF AN INFANT.

ADDRESS OF AN INFANT.

In this dark, cold cell of earth,
Soon was I prisoned after birth;
Scarce the dawn of Life began,
Ere Death dissolved my little span.
I no smiling pleasures knew;
I no gay delights could view:
Joyless sojourner was I,
Only born to weep and die!
Yet, though to man's imperfect view,
My days appear so sad, so few,
Their mem'ry swells my present bliss;
My wo's exchang'd for happiness!

REPLY OF A CHRISTIAN.

Happy infant! Early blest!
Rest, in peaceful slumber rest;
Early rescu'd from the cares,
Which increase with growing years.
No delights are worth thy stay,
Smiling as they seem, and gay;
Short and sickly are they all,
Hardly tasted, ere they fall.
All our gaiety is vain;
All our laughter preludes pain:

Lasting only and divine,
Is an innocence like thine.
Escap'd from sorrow, vice and pain,
No conflict canst thou now maintain
With feeble Nature's various woes,
Which peace and happiness oppose.
But, object of redeeming love!
Thou'rt call'd to endless joys above;
Where thy fond parents hope to soar,
And meet thee, ne'er to sep'rate more.

THE FOLLOWING LINES ARE SELECTED FROM THAT MANUAL OF PIETY,

DR. YOUNG'S NIGHT THOUGTS.

"Heav'n gives us friends to bless the present scene,
Resumes them to prepare us for the next.
Affliction is the good man's shining scene;
Prosperity conceals his brightest ray:
As night to stars, wo lustre gives to man.
Grief! more proficients in thy school are made,
Than Genius or proud Learning e'er could boast.
Amid my list of blessings infinite
Stands this the foremost, "*that my heart has bled.*"
'Tis Heav'n's last effort of good will to man.
When Pain can't bless, Heav'n quits us in despair.
When by the bed of Languishment we sit,
Or o'er our dying friends in anguish hang,
Wipe the cold dew, or stay the sinking head,
Number their moments, and in ev'ry clock
Start at the voice of an *Eternity*,
See the dim lamp of life just feebly lift
An agonizing beam at us to gaze,
Then sink again, and quiver into death,
That most pathetic herald of our own;
How read we such sad scenes? As sent to man
In perfect vengeance? No; in pity sent,
To melt him down like wax, and then impress
Indelibly Death's image on his heart.
Bleeding for others, trembling for himself.
We bleed, we tremble, we forget, we smile;

The mind turns fool, before the cheek is dry:
Our quick returning folly cancels all;
As the tide rushing razes what is writ
In yielding sands, and smooths the letter'd shore.
In death's uncertainty thy danger lies.
Is death uncertain? Therefore thou be fix'd;
Fix'd as a centinel, all eye, all ear,
All expectation of the coming foe.
Rouse, stand in arms, nor lean against thy spear,
Lest slumber steal one moment o'er thy soul,
And Death surprise thee nodding. Watch! be strong!
Thus give each day the merit and renown
Of dying well, though doom'd but once to die.
Each branch of piety delight inspires:
Faith builds a bridge from this world to the next,
O'er Death's dark gulf, and all its horror hides.
Patience and Resignation are the pillars
Of human peace on earth. Though tempests frown,
Though nature shakes, how soft to lean on Heav'n;
To lean on Him, on whom Archangels lean!
In ev'ry storm that either frowns or falls,
What an asylum has the soul in pray'r!
Pray'r ardent opens Heav'n, lets down a stream
Of glory on the consecrated hour
Of man in audience with the Deity.—
A soul in commerce with her God, is Heav'n;
Feels not the tumults and the shocks of life,
The whirls of passion and the strokes of heart."

PRAYERS

ACCOMMODATED TO THE VARIOUS INSTANCES OF MORTALITY.

INTRODUCTORY PRAYER.

O THOU Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent Being, who hast placed thy creature man, in the general scale of creation, "but a little lower than the angels," and hast endowed him with *Reason* to discern what is good, and *Revelation* to teach him what thou requirest of him; together with faculties by which he may know and hold communion with his God; enable me, I beseech thee, by the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, so to elevate my affections, and direct my desires to thee, that my petitions, my prayers, and praises may be acceptable in thy sight: look with compassion upon my infirmities, and grant that, in all my troubles, I may put my whole trust and confidence in thy mercy, and evermore serve thee in holiness and pureness of living, to thy honour and glory, through Jesus Christ, my Redeemer and Intercessor. Amen.

PRAYER

FOR A PARENT ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

ALMIGHTY and eternal God, to whom alone belong the issues of life and death, and who dost not willingly afflict, or grieve the children of men, sanctify to

me, I beseech thee, the dispensation of thy divine providence by which I have been deprived of my beloved child. With the most profound submission I bow beneath thy parental chastening.—"Thy will be done," O heavenly Father! Enable me, I beseech thee, to receive this afflictive visitation as becometh a disciple of thy blessed son: may I experience the consolation offered by his Gospel, and improve the event, to the furtherance of my own salvation, by increasing my diligence in preparing for my departure from this world. By the atonement and intercession of our divine Saviour, I humbly trust, that the soul of my dear child is now admitted to partake of the "inheritance of the saints in light."

O Lord, have compassion upon my infirmities, pardon my sins, illuminate my mind, sublime my affections, purify my heart, and finally receive me into the mansions of celestial and eternal bliss, through the merits and mediation of thine adorable son Jesus Christ, my Redeemer, to whom with thee O Father, and thee O Holy Ghost, three persons, but one eternal, omniscient, and omnipotent God, be ascribed everlasting praises. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

PRAYER

FOR A CHILD ON THE DEATH OF A PARENT.

O THOU great Parent of the universe, from whom all things proceed, on whom all things depend, and who art worthy of all possible veneration, gratitude and

obedience, with the most profound conviction of my own unworthiness of the least of all thy mercies, and of thine infinite wisdom and goodness, I desire to prostrate myself before the footstool of thy throne, and in the deepest humility of Christian resignation to say—"Thy will be done!" In thy wisdom thou hast thought proper to deprive me of my tenderly beloved parent, my guide, my protector, my counsellor, and best friend. O thou great and good Being! who hast promised to be a father to the fatherless of those who trust in thee, and to love them more than a mother doth; enable me, by thy divine grace, to improve the trials and withstand the temptations of the world, and so to recommend myself to thy favour by a faithful conformity to thy precepts, and a diligent discharge of the duties of the station in which thou shalt place me, that when I also shall be summoned by thy messenger Death, to give an account of my stewardship, I may resign my soul into the hands of my merciful Redeemer, with holy confidence, and with heavenly rapture; be received as a good and faithful servant, and admitted into thy heavenly kingdom; where, reunited to the soul of my departed parent, we may experience together the fullness of joy through the endless ages of eternity.

PRAYER

FOR A HUSBAND ON THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE.

O THOU omnipotent Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the Universe! The Father of our spirits! the Inspector of our conduct! and the Rewarder and Punisher

of our thoughts, words and actions! look down in mercy, I beseech thee, upon me and my bereaved, afflicted family.—Enable us by thy divine grace to support and improve the agonizing dispensation with which thou hast been pleased to visit us. May the death of my beloved wife teach me to quicken my preparation for the exchange of worlds which she has now experienced. May I imitate her virtues, and endeavour to purify myself by penitence and prayer for admission into thy heavenly kingdom, where I trust she is enrolled among the faithful disciples of thy blessed Son. O Father of mercies, have mercy upon me! May I learn righteousness by the things which I suffer, and without murmuring at the chastenings of thy providence, may I at all times, with Christian resignation and confidence, calmly submit to thy divine will: and may I so pass through the waves of this toilsome and tempestuous life, that I may finally arrive at the haven of celestial rest and happiness, where, reunited to the soul of my dear departed wife, we may enjoy together the felicity of Heaven through the endless ages of eternity.

Almighty Father, alleviate the sorrows of my heart! Comfort me with the blessed influence of thy grace, that I may subdue the rebellious opposition of my depraved passions to thy divine and infinitely wise decrees; and may the remainder of my days on earth be devoted to a diligent preparation for death and judgment: create in me a contrite heart, O God, and enable me by the aid of thy Holy Spirit, to redeem the time I have mispent in folly or in sin, in forgetfulness of thee, and disobedience to thy laws. Have mercy upon me, O God! for the sake of Jesus Christ thy son, my Mediator, Intercessor, and Redeemer. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

PRAYER

FOR A WIFE ON THE DEATH OF HER HUSBAND.

"THY will be done!" Almighty Father! I desire to bow, O thou infinitely great, good, and glorious Being, who art the author of our existence, and the giver of every good gift to man!—I desire to bow, with the most devout submission, to that dispensation of thy divine Providence which hath deprived me of my earthly protector and best friend. "The sorrows of my heart are enlarged—O bring thou me out all my troubles!" Give me grace, I humbly beseech thee, to submit to thy divine will, and derive from the afflicting event that spiritual improvement which may tend to the advancement of my eternal interest. Grant, O Lord! that it may awaken in me a more alarming consciousness of my own approaching dissolution, and quicken my diligence in preparing for its occurrence. May the recollection of the various exertions of my departed husband for the interest and support of his family, now by him forever discontinued, excite a full conviction of the increase of my responsibility, and induce more active endeavours to fulfil the obligations which now rest solely upon me as [a parent and] the head of a family. Enable me, O Heavenly Father! by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, to think and to do such things as shall render me acceptable in thy sight, and, when the period of my probation shall be ended, procure my admission into thy heavenly kingdom, through the merits and intercession of thy blessed Son, my Redeemer, in whose comprehensive words I further implore thy favour and forgiveness.

Our Father, &c.

PRAYER

ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND.

ALMIGHTY and eternal God, Creator of all things, Judge of all men!—Under a deep conviction of thine unerring wisdom and goodness, I most humbly beseech thee to sanctify the afflictive visitation of thy Providence, in the loss of my beloved friend; may it lead me to make more active and earnest preparation for the period of my own departure from this state of trial: may I more frequently and effectually consider the shortness and uncertainty of the time afforded me to work out my eternal salvation, and of the awful responsibility of my character as a rational and immortal Being—may the means of grace not be offered to me in vain—may the hopes of eternal glory animate me to discharge every Christian duty enjoined by thy blessed son; that when I shall be called, like my departed friend, to give an account of my stewardship, I may do it with a joyful consciousness of fidelity in improving the talents thou hast committed to my trust. Contemplating thine infinite goodness and gracious promises to mankind through the merits of thy dear Son, I humbly trust that the soul of my deceased friend, now rests with thee in joy and felicity; and may I so pass through this my probationary state in thy faith and fear, that we may again be associated in that state of everlasting glory, which thou hast promised to all those who faithfully trust in thee, and uniformly keep thy commandments. I most humbly beseech thee to enable me so to do, by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit. O God! be merciful to me, a sinner; be merciful to me, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

A PRAYER

TO BE USED IN A FAMILY, ON THE DEATH OF ANY OF ITS MEMBERS.

HOLY! Holy! Holy! Lord God Almighty! Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! three persons, but one eternal God! we adore and worship thee, whose infinite *power* hath called us into existence, whose infinite *wisdom* hath given us those capacities, which, if duly exercised, may best promote thy glory and our truest happiness, and to whose infinite *mercy* and *goodness* we are indebted for innumerable temporal, and inestimable spiritual blessings. As becometh frail, sinful, dependant creatures, we desire to bow before thee, with unfeigned humility and ardent devotion; and, in every dispensation of thy Divine Providence, whether of comfort or affliction, to bless and magnify thy glorious name. We beseech thee to have compassion upon our infirmities, and enable us, by the inspiration of thy divine grace, to think and to do always such things as shall be acceptable unto thee; and as thou hast now been pleased to visit our habitation with sickness and death, teach us, by this near and alarming call, to consider our ways, seriously to reflect upon the uncertainty of life, the awful responsibility of our characters, as rational beings and free agents, blessed with the illumination of the Gospel of thy Son, and the glorious and animating promises which he hath there given to Christian obedience and fidelity.

May the summons now given to our departed *brother*, to render an account of *his* stewardship, alarm our fears for our own safety, invigorate our exertions

in working out our salvation, solemnize our hearts, by inducing a conviction of the unavoidable certainty of Death, Judgment, and Eternity, and quicken our diligence in preparing for our own dissolution. Strengthen our faith, increase our hope, enlarge our charity, and perfect our repentance. And grant, O merciful God! that we may so pass through things temporal, that when called before thy awful bar, to answer for the deeds done in the body, we may receive the approving sentence, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your lord."

Our Father, &c.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. Amen.

THE END.